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Christian beliefs and
modern thought

WITHDRAWN

Presented to

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Elliott

by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Shrock

as a token of their good will.

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Christian Beliefs

and

Modern Thought

A SERIES OF SERMONS PREACHED
DURING THE AUTUMN OF 1929

by

HAROLD LEONARD BOWMAN 1889-

Minister of the

First Presbyterian Church

Portland, Oregon

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To
the members of the First Presbyterian Church
of Portland, Oregon,
whose constant loyalty, spiritual vision,
intelligent faith and grant of freedom
have made their pulpit
a joy to their ministers and
a power for progressive Christianity
in the Pacific Northwest.

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PREFACE

There are many people today who in honesty have felt compelled to discard certain dogmas of the past but who earnestly desire a religion that is both intellectual and inspiring, that is at once scientific and spiritual. This series of sermons has been built upon the conviction that liberal, evangelical Christianity will meet that need. The effort therefore, has been made to present the vital factors of Christian belief and experience in such terms that to the scientifically trained minds of today they will not only be acceptable, but will also appeal as the best way of life. If religion is to have a vital part in the experience of the many people who are familiar with current trends of scientific and philosophical thought, it must challenge their intelligence as well as satisfy their aspirations. It is my own conviction that we must move toward a more realistic theology expressed in more idealistic living. We should have thinking that is more scientific and living that is more Jesus-like. Religion must be a blend of intelligence and experience, of science and mysticism, of sound thought and daring life.

L. P. Jacks combines the two aspects well when he defines faith as "reason grown courageous."

More than I can say am I indebted to the members of the First Presbyterian Church for the ten years of spiritual cooperation and intellectual stimulus which have made possible the preaching of these sermons; and I am deeply grateful for the cordial response which has called for their publication. However, this church, like others, comprises folk of divergent opinions and it would be distinctly unjust to consider any person responsible for the subject-matter of these sermons save the preacher himself. But it is significant that our churches are outgrowing the attitude of the elder in the Free Church of Scotland at the time of the Robertson Smith controversy. "Granting," he said, "that Robertson Smith is right, if it is truth, it is dangerous truth, and he has no right as a professor of the church, to upset the church by declaring it." Let us be thankful that a new day is dawning in our churches, when the members prefer that their ministers do creative rather than conventional thinking!

This book is the beginning of the matter and not the end. It deals with the intellectual tools of religious living. After we have thought through the

problems of faith, we must be sure that we are living religiously. The free and joyous adventure of living at life's best as Jesus did, is the matter of supreme importance and that for which such a book as this can but prepare the way for modern-minded folk. If Jesus' way of life is made more rational, more winsome, so that some may feel moved to venture forth upon it, these studies will not have failed in their purpose.

HAROLD LEONARD BOWMAN.

Portland, Oregon,
November 11, 1929.

SHALL THE CHURCH DODGE OR MEET THE CHALLENGE OF MODERN THOUGHT?

THERE was once an ancient castle, rambling in plan and strange in architecture, since its various parts were built in different ages. The guard on the ramparts one day startled the inhabitants of the castle by the appalling announcement that there was a great company of men coming to attack and destroy their stronghold. In feverish excitement the people crowded to the windows, and peering through, saw indeed a great advancing host with banners flying. They were bearing stones evidently eager to hurl them in destructive wrath against the castle walls. In dismay the company within prepared to withstand the siege. After much time had elapsed the defenders of the castle perceived that the besieging army was growing; indeed they discovered that from time to time some of their own number would quietly slip through the gate and join the great company on the outside. At last, in the sheer exhaustion, the beleaguered group within the castle consented to confer with the great encompassing hosts. They low-

ered the draw-bridge across the moat; they raised the portcullis and the great company moved in, its leaders exclaiming with a blend of puzzlement and joy: "Why did you not know us? Did you not see that we are your fellow countrymen; that we all serve the same king? Did you not see "truth" blazoned brightly on our banners? Why did you think that we had come to destroy you? We have come to help! Lo, across the hills and valleys at great pain to ourselves, we have brought these many great stones, carefully hewn, that with them we may build for you and for ourselves a grander castle, a more glorious edifice wherein together we can serve our lord, the king!" Then it was that the castle-dwellers, with tears of shame and penitence, welcomed belatedly the great company of their brothers and together they built a grander castle and one more enduring.

That parable may serve as the motif of the series of studies of Christian belief in which I am asking you to share. We shall strive to fling open wide the doors of our minds to welcome the great phalanxes of scientific facts with their bright banners of truth and to share with them in the building of a structure in which God may be more worthily worshipped and man may be more effectually served.

Let us be sure at the outset that we understand clearly the real meaning of religion and are not confusing the essence with the externals. What is it that is the continuing common factor in religion of all ages and races? The essence of all religion is a certain quality of personality, a certain kind of response to one's environment, a particular attitude toward life, a definite type of experience, in which man enters into conscious relationship to Reality. This experience creates in the individual a degree of integration, of inner peace; it is a source of inner satisfaction and joy; it is a germinator of power; it brings a sense of freedom, a degree of insight, a mastery of circumstance. This inner experience, this spiritual quality of life is in some measure present in all that bears the term "religion." The essence of religion then is something inward; it is personal; it is creative.

But we find that in every age this experience is defined in the terms of contemporary thought. The savage described his religious experience in accord with his picture of the world. The Greeks, the Hebrews, the Church Fathers, the Scholastics, the scientists—all of them inevitably describe and explain that inward experience in the terms of their own thinking. Soon the explanation comes to have

the same prestige as the experience. So it is that in every age the description of religious experience leads to dogma; there spring up accepted statements of religious belief which become coercive; creeds become compulsory, and doctrines grow authoritative. Organizations arise for dogmatic defense and doctrinal promotion—until at last the acceptance of dogma becomes the substitute for living religiously; and faith, instead of being an attitude toward life, becomes a blind acceptance of all that one is told to believe.

Yet we discover that in the history of religion there has been continually a sloughing-off process. Religious experience is personal, vital, creative, penetrative. It keeps breaking out of the shell of past descriptions; like the chambered nautilus, it is ever building vaster domes for itself. We find the prophets, with a vivid insight into reality, discarding completely the sacrificial system of the priests. We hear Job demanding a readjustment of the conventional theology of his comforters, in the light of reality. We see Jesus breaking through the forms of a decadent Judaism and living and preaching the gospel of a spiritual faith. We note Paul adapting that gospel message to the phrases and mental categories of the Gentiles. We per-

ceive the Church slowly, with a pathetic unwillingness adapting itself to the Copernican astronomy. In our own time we have been passing through a readjustment of religious ideas to biology and evolution. Indeed, the history of religion, has been the record of an adaptive process, a readjustment in points of view, a surrender of outworn interpretations of religious experience and a more adequate interpretation of that experience in view of a greater number of facts.

In our own age we are passing through just such a period of readjustment. However, it is an adaptation so much more far-reaching than any that has been required in the past that many are finding it difficult to make the change, without any loss of reality, but rather with a deepening sense of life's spiritual values. Let us consider why it is that this readjustment in our own generation is so drastic.

The structure of Christian thought was built in a pre-scientific age, and by men who were more interested in metaphysical interpretations than they were in demonstrable fact. The doctrines of Christianity were for the most part formulated by folk who were in utter ignorance of the age-old history of the universe, of the staggering, almost mentally devastating, magnitude of space. They knew noth-

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ing about the dependability of natural law; they had meager capacity for the historic evaluation of evidence; they saw no reason for distinction between fact and interpretation, between event and edification; they had no reason for distinguishing between literal truth and symbolic truth; they did not perceive the line between believing and knowing; achieving belief by persuasion or coercion was felt to be the equivalent of imparting knowledge by facts.

That does not mean that religious experience was not genuine, that truth was not in a considerable measure comprehended; nor does it signify that the religious contribution of the prophets and the poets, supremely of Jesus, are belittled. But it does indicate that the explanation and the interpretation, the systematizing of those experiences into a theology were the work of men who were not capable of keeping their thought-processes or their conclusions free from error. This situation can no longer continue for thoughtful folk. We have entered a new era in human history. We have discovered the scientific method. We have gotten hold of a means, which men never before had, of discovering truth, of eliminating error, of thinking correctly. Business, manufacturing, edu-

cation, and the arts have already been revolutionized in this scientific age. Transportation, communication, illumination—in fact every aspect of our daily lives, everything we wear or eat or use has been changed, improved, simplified, by science in this modern age. Religion is the last great human interest to feel the scrutiny of the scientific method. The question arises in many minds, can the scientific method and the demonstrated data of the scientists be accepted in the field of religion? As we have adjusted ourselves from horses to automobiles, from postriders to telegraphs, telephones and radios, from covered wagons to Transcontinental Limiteds and airplanes, can we make an adaptation of religion to these new fields of thought?

We want to face the situation squarely. Let us name over some of the fields from which are coming facts which cannot be ignored in this readjustment of the religious outlook. Consider physics with its profoundly revolutionary concept of matter, with its demonstration that every solid substance is in reality made up of moving masses of energy farther apart from each other than the planets. Take the findings of astrophysics and the contributions of Einstein, Michaelson, Compton, Eddington and others. Just let your imagination reach

out into stellar space and you will discover that very many of the religious ideas of the past fall into the discard. Here are facts to be taken into account.

There is the whole field of natural law, dependable, universal; the discovery that nothing happens without a cause and that that cause is always discernible if you use sufficient scrutiny and insight. Our understanding of natural law requires complete restatement of our concepts of God and of his relationship to the world. Many of the beliefs of those who knew nothing of natural law completely missed the issues which the modern thinker must face.

Biology with its discovery of man's pre-human history, anthropology with the study of man's infancy, sociology with its consideration of man's group action—all open up for us immense fields of facts of which the creators of our theology never even dreamed. The new methods of studying history are revolutionary. They enable us to discern fact from tradition; they fit us to understand certain events more accurately than the people who participated in them. This historical method has furnished us a new technique for the study of our religious literature. It insists that we should no longer depend upon traditions of authorship or in-

cident, but should get back to the actual, the genuine.

As incisive as all these is the insistence of psychology that we shall take account of the way in which the human mind operates, its tendencies toward wishful thinking, toward rationalization, its suggestibility, its inclination to think in ruts rather than creatively.

That is a hurried survey of some of the scientific fields which are today by verifiable methods transforming the unknown into the known. They are bringing to us a wealth of fact which can be demonstrated by anyone who is willing to undertake the task of examination. They are not final facts; they are not ultimate truths; they are all capable of enlargement, restatement and correction—but so far as they go, they are demonstrable and are accepted today by the students of the world. Here they are, a great company of scientific facts bearing the banners of truth. What is to be the attitude of the Church?

There are many, we recognize, who like the castle folk in our parable behold with fear the onward marching forces of science. There have been

religious leaders through recent decades who have sought to fight the advance of science because they were aware that if these truths of science were accepted then some of their beliefs would have to be surrendered. And they were altogether right; the fear of some folk that the advent of the scientific method in religion will invalidate some of their cherished beliefs is a correct conclusion. But what they fail to see is this—that it will invalidate only those of their beliefs which are false or inadequate. All the science in the world can never invalidate a single religious belief which is inherently true. That is why we are so erroneous if we try to close the castle gates against the onward march of science, for science is religion's great aid in escaping from the conditionings of its past, from the swaddling clothes of its infancy, and moving on into the greater freedom of fuller truth.

Therefore I am pleading in all this series of studies for a fearless, gladsome, openminded welcome to all that science can contribute to our view of the universe. Our purpose shall be not to dragoon science into the support of what we already believe; our purpose will be fearless fact-finding and our methods courageously realistic. Ours shall

be the effort to find a rational relationship between two fields of fact. On the one hand the fact of religious experience as it is historically recorded, as we find it in ourselves; and on the other the whole scientific portrait of the world in which we live. Such a correlation will enable us to be scientific and at the same time to achieve that religious quality of life which science of itself can not create. How can we, a scientifically trained people in the twentieth century be religious? How are we to re-think in terms of modern thought the great beliefs which have marked Christian history?

Does it seem to some of you that this is a bold undertaking? It is not its boldness that impresses me, but its necessity. It must be done! Facts in religion and facts in science cannot contradict each other. And the only way in which we can demonstrate which are the facts and which are not the facts is the scientific method of investigation and analysis. There is no other way. In the end men will have to be true to the facts. It is not only desirable it is inevitable that the Church should confront these problems and readjust its point of view to demonstrated reality. We are as churches and as individuals making adaptations here and there. But you and I all know how constantly the purpose

of the church is promotion and not fact-finding, its method emotion and not search. But if the Church is to maintain the respect of the trained minds of our generation, we shall be compelled to take into account in our thinking the whole field of science. It will have to be done in the end. If we do not do it, if we insist for sentimental reasons upon keeping the dogmatic structure just as we have grown used to it, then our children will have to make the change—and to our shame. Demonstrated fact is bound to win. Science is invincible reality, and everything that contravenes that which science demonstrates, has in it the germs of decay. It is pathetic that so many people should demand that the Church stake its all on a lost cause! Rather should the Church by its alliance with science partake of the timeless triumph of truth!

There are, I believe, a good many people whose training and professional work brings them into touch with the scientific method, and whose reading familarizes them with the field of modern thought, and who at the same time have a genuine religious hunger, a desire for that quality of life which Jesus called "abundant," which brings peace, integration, joy, and a sense of intimate comradeship with the divine. Such people are eager for

some attitude toward life that will make daily existence meaningful and its difficulties endurable. It is to this type of mind that this series of sermons is intended particularly to appeal, as week by week we endeavor to think through the relation of Christian belief and modern thought, seeking to conserve all those values that stand the test of scientific investigation, seeking to reach a higher, truer, more satisfying concept of religion.

There are two or three other things which should be said by way of introduction to this series. The first is that our purpose will be constantly affirmative and constructive. We shall move forward, not merely by letting things go, but by grasping larger truth. There will be times when we shall have to clear away a bit of debris before we construct. But we shall try to remember that we are seeking to build a structure and not to destroy. While we are working with many problems we shall strive to remember, as one has suggested, that the nut-cracker is not so important as the kernel.

One other thing should be borne in mind. Our study is to be life-centered. We are not dealing with these questions of religious belief for their

own sake, nor for the Church's sake; we are considering them because every one of them ties into the problem of the well-adjusted life at its best. It is life in which we are interested, man lifted by truth to the height of his capacity.

One closing word should be spoken. Never in life and certainly never in religion, does the dilletante arrive anywhere. It is not as an observer but as a participant that one achieves the religious life. There are many of the so-called "intelligentsia" whose attitude toward religion is that of a man who yawns. Their approach to life's highest values is cynical. They lean back in the armchair of their own assumed superiority and challenge the world to awaken their interest if it can. That attitude is the antithesis of both the scientific and the religious state of mind. It discerns no truth; it finds no God. It is only when we learn to bow in reverence before the mystery of life, only as we come to feel that beyond appearances there is a meaning, that beyond the horizon "where the blue begins" there are alluring adventures for which we thirst,—that science learns how to think and religion to love and to pray. Only thus can we share in this task with deepening religious experience.

You recall that Browning's "Paracelsus" said:

> Are there not, dear Michal
> Two points in the adventure of the diver,
> One—when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge,
> One—when, a prince, he rises with his pearl.

We are plunging into an adventure in the field of religious thought. There are problems and inconsistencies, questions and uncertainties, which haunt us. Let our prayer be, our determination and our faith, that we shall rise proud possessors of a "pearl of great price," having found the deep-sea gem of truth, lustrously shining. And, if I mistake not, we shall find that as a result of our devoted adventure, religion will be more real and life more radiant.

GOD

THERE is a statement of John Huxley's which echoes one of the sayings of Jesus: "Sit down before a fact as a little child; be prepared to give up every preconceived notion; follow humbly wherever and to whatever nature leads." It is in that teachable spirit that we consider the basic religious fact—God. That our ideas of God must be changed and magnified in the light of new facts which have arisen upon our horizon is a truism which none of us will dispute. The naive and inadequate God of

> That inverted bowl we call the sky
> Whereunder crawling, coop't we live and die,

will no longer satisfy the modern mind. The greater universe demands a greater concept of Deity. There are some who tell us that modern science has relieved us of the necessity of God, that he may now be ushered to the confines of the universe and brusquely bowed out. Modern science has certainly made some ideas of God impossible. Has it invalidated the entire God-idea? Opinions differ. La Place swung his telescope through the

heavens and exclaimed that he could find God nowhere. Newton studied the stars and said reverently: "I am thinking God's thoughts after him." Amid such contrasting voices as these, what are we to think, we who feel both a passion for mental integrity and a deep hunger for life at its best? What are we to think of God?

It is always well to begin with facts which can be demonstrated and regarding which there can be no question in any investigative mind. If science cannot prove the existence of God, can science prove certain factors about the universe which the hypothesis of God will adequately explain? Let us see.

In the first place it can be demonstrated that throughout time and space there is a *principle of unity* which gives us not a multiverse but a universe. The multitudinous, far-flung portions of the world of nature have some law-abiding inner connection. A certain element, whether held in the scientist's hand or existent in a star thousands of light years away, produces the identical image in the spectroscope. Professor Whitehead goes further and points out that there is a "principle of concretion," mathematically demonstrable, by which every particle of the universe is affected

though in an infinitesimal way by every other part, and is what it is because of every other particle. Within the universe there is obviously some principle of unity, some power of coordination, some cohesive, interrelated system.

In the second place science can demonstrate to us that there is in the universe a *principle of adaptation.* We find it meagerly in the unicellular organism, we find it increasingly as we move into higher phases of life. This adaptation is not the result of the intelligence of the adapting life. It has gone on through millions of years without any awareness whatever on the part of those species which were being preserved by that adaptation. Take an illustration: through a million years or more did the scales of flying reptiles change into the feathers of birds. As an illustration of this principle of adaptation which goes on without any conscious participation of the creatures themselves, let us recall a quotation from J. Arthur Thompson's book "Science and Religion":

> A bird's feather is one of the most perfect structures in the world. On a single pinion, plucked from the wing of an eagle we can count nearly a million interrelated parts. All together they form a sail which strikes the wind firmly yet elastically, not letting the

air get through the web and still not permitting itself to be broken. This structure of the feather means that it adds little to the bird's weight, and yet it increases enormously his ability to row in the air. As long as the feather grows it is fed. When the constitutionally ordained limit for its growth is reached, it stops growing; but even then it does not die and drop off too quickly. By the time it has gradually moulted off, a new feather is ready to take its place—in the case of many birds just in time for the long migratory journey, when frayed feathers would be dangerous. And this is only the beginning of the feather's marvels. A feather is difficult to wet—an obvious advantage in the case of a creature exposed to all sorts of weather. The feathers form a non-conducting robe around the bird's body which conserves with peculiar effectiveness the precious animal-heat within. Often this robe of feathers is colored in such a way that it gives its possessor a cloak of invisibility. Even the fallen feathers form the best kind of a quilt for the new generation, snug and warm in a nest. Remember too that when a bird rows his way through the air, the feathers tilt back automatically as the wings are raised for the new stroke. Oarsmen have borrowed the trick and call it "feathering" the oars. It economized a great deal of energy for the bird in the air and for the imitator in the boat below.

Science can furnish us thousands of other illustrations of that principle of adaptation.

We find also operative in the physical world a *principle of progress;* there is some kind of a push —or a pull, some people think—at least there is a movement in an onward direction. The cooling planet did not stay lifeless. The one-cell organism did not stay a one-cell organism. There was development and advance. It was a slow process. We must not ignore the fact that it was marked by many failures and false starts. But anyone who will compare an amoeba with an Einstein, an earthworm with a Michael-Angelo, a saber-toothed tiger with a Florence Nightingale, cannot ignore that there is in the world a principle of progress, a principle which down through the countless ages has been moving life-wards, freedom-wards, intelligence-wards, personality-wards, and has been moving in that direction—at least until the dawn of human intelligence and self-consciousness—devoid of the conscious intent of the participants.

We find also in this world process which science describes for us, a *principle of values.* Men have come to perceive a worth in beauty, a value in truth, a glory in goodness, a splendor in love. We see glimmers of this sense of values in the prehuman stages of the process, and we find it emerging with increasing clearness with the developing

intelligence of humanity. Men have come to feel that truth is better than falsehood; that beauty is more desirable than ugliness; that goodness transcends evil; that love is nobler than hatred. The process of human development has involved an appreciation of these values and of their basic relationship to reality.

All that we have said so far is, I believe, scientifically demonstrable and would not be denied by any student of the facts. There are factors of disunity, maladaptation and retrogression, which we must not ignore in our picture, but they are not such as to invalidate these general principles which we find in the process of evolution: unity, adaptation, progress, value.

Man's intelligence, his insatiable curiosity, his demand for rational unity drive him to seek an explanation of that process. There is in man, as Plato suggested, "a desire to know." What is the meaning of this world process and the source of these principles? The method of the scientist is first of all to form a working hypothesis which seems best to account for the facts. If it adequately supports the facts it may be accepted as dependable with the conviction that fuller facts will amplify it. The astronomers discovered, as

you know, that certain movements of the planets could only be explained by another planet of a certain size and in a certain location. Later discovery showed Neptune to be just where they had predicated and just the kind of a planet they had indicated. What working hypothesis can we suggest which will explain the facts of science?

There have been two hypotheses that have been offered—two explanations of the universe: one is mechanism, the other is God. The first suggests that the process is devoid of purpose, of intent, of intelligence; that the whole course has been mechanical. We cannot turn aside at this point to indicate the weakness and the inadequacy of mechanistic materialism. We shall have to confine ourselves to this question: does the hypothesis of God adequately meet the facts of science? I suggest for your consideration the proposition that the hypothesis of God is the only one which does satisfactorily meet those facts. When we consider the unity and the integration of this universe; when we think of the way in which there has been a constant adaptation of animal structure to environment without animal intent; as we grow aware of that tremendous push upward, onward, outward, are we not driven to posit a mind and a pur-

posive power back of and within the universe? Are not unity, coordination, adaptation, progress, value, the fruits of mind? I find myself unable to believe that the identity of law through the spacious firmament is devoid of significance; that the adaptation of the bird's wings through a million years was unprompted by a creative intelligence. I cannot believe that that inward urge of life upward toward man is the result of a purposeless, blind, fortuitous mechanism. The sense of beauty, the passion for truth, the hopes, the aspirations, the sense of values, that have glorified the race—these I cannot believe are unrooted in reality. To me evolution has proven the validity, the necessity of an immanent, creative, purposive intelligence in the universe. The scientist may call this "the principle of concretion"; the philosopher may call it "the Absolute"; the artist may call it "Beauty"; the worshipper calls it "God."

How then are we to think of God, this purposive mind in and back of all things? Let us first consider the effect upon our idea of God, of recent discoveries as to time and space. Of course our concept of God must be different from that of men who thought of God's creative processes as begin-

ning just over the crest of yesterday. The God who moulded a world in six days from sunrise to sunset in 4004 B. C., must be necessarily inadequate for him who knows that the creative process has been going on for millions of years. Our new understanding of the size of the universe has necessitated an enlargement of our concept of Deity. The yardstick of the astronomer is the light-year, a little less than six trillion miles, the distance that light travels, moving at the rate of one hundred eighty-six thousand miles a second. Our astrophysicists tell us that the universe has a diameter of about two hundred million light-years — two hundred million years for light to travel from one end of the universe to the other! It is altogether too staggering! We cannot grasp it. But we must have an idea of God that is great enough to make him the Creator, the immanent Power in such a cosmos. There is no picture of God that will satisfy a modern mind that cannot be set to the magnificent melody of a universe like that! And yet we find some men discussing God, praying to him as though he were a hail-fellow-well-met, a sort of boyhood pal! I think sometimes that the soul which by the grandeur of the universe bows in agnosticism, is more reverent than the blatent relig-

ionists who prate familiarly of the Divine, or who pray in the jargon of the gutter!

But the magnitude of the universe is no more staggering than its minuteness. In orderly fashion, we are learning, is matter made up not of atoms but of incredibly smaller protons and electrons, each proton a positive charge of electricity with its family of negative electrons moving about it—you note the symbol of the family which the scientist uses! These orbits are of such size that the electrons are farther from each other in proportion to their bulk than are the planets. And what is their bulk? Each electron weighs approximately nine nonillions of a gram—that is nine with thirty ciphers after it—and the universe two hundred million light years in diameter is made up of orderly electrons that size! If all the electrons in the human body could be compacted and the intervening space squeezed out, the result would be a tiny speck just visible to the finest microscope—all the rest is organization! A proton of carbon has twenty electrons dancing about it, occasionally one of the twenty rises to a higher orbit and then falls back into place, emitting in its rise a tiny ripple of violet light, but that variation from its orbit has a duration of only one hundred millionth of a second!

The mind which rolls the stars along is the power also immanent in the dance of the electrons. What a mind! What a God! How mysterious! How sublime! How transcendent! How immanent!

Our concept of God is also materially affected by our understanding of natural law. The laws of nature are really our statements of the way in which the world-process behaves. Science has discovered that that behavior is uniformly dependable; that it is predictable. It has been shown that we live in a constant and a lawful universe; that certain causes always lead to certain results. We should recognize that in the action of law-abiding energy we see the impersonal aspect of the universe. The laws of nature operate regardless of man's wishes or man's morals; as Jesus said: "God sends rain on the just and the unjust," and Paul echoed, "God is no respecter of persons." He who faces reality must accept the impersonal, unvarying operations of natural law. The conventional concept of God is an inheritance from the days when men knew nothing about natural law, when events, such as weather, storms, floods and the like, were all thought to be subject to the incidental will of God. God worked in the world, by interven-

tion, by miraculous intrusion, by changing the order of things.

But with our modern understanding of the unvarying laws of nature we perceive that the surrender of the idea of spectacular intervention does not mean a giving up of the idea of God as active in the world. The God who is immanent in an orderly and constant universe is a far greater God than the God who "plays hob" with his own processes. We are understanding now that freedom and growth are possible only in a world of dependable sequences, that progress is possible, not as we violate these laws, or pray for their violation, but as we cooperate with them. Indeed we perceive that the principle of progress has been operating within and through these laws, working, for instance, through a million years rather than create a feather in an instant, in lawless fashion. God's creative method has set an example which man can well follow:

> Who sets his feet on law's firm track
> The universe is at his back.

This leads us to a statement of what the modern mind can believe about the will of God. There is involved here a recognition of the laws of na-

ture, a study of them, a fuller discovery of them, an ardent cooperation with them, an adoption into life of those highest values for which the race has been striving, a discovery of truth, of beauty, of goodness and love, human well-being and social progress—all these finest things for which God's creative process has been working are the texture of God's will. In so far as man understands and works with these processes and incorporates these values, he is doing the will of God. In so far as he falls short of them, he is working against the creative process and is out of harmony with the divine mind. God's will is not sporadic, occasional, variable; it is the essence of the whole world process working ever and always for the best and the highest. God is not only the indwelling essence of the actual, he is also the God of the possible; which saves immanence from pantheism and transcendence from deism.

Another question arises, in what way can we think of this creative mind as personal? When we think of God, are we, as has been charged, simply projecting ourselves upon the universe? Let us admit at the outset that many folk when they speak about the personality of God, are thinking in petty and belittling terms. Many people's thought of

personality is so poverty-stricken that to apply it to God is unworthy. Then, too, we certainly want to outgrow many of the primitive concepts of God which are grossly crude and anthropomorphic. Nevertheless, while our thought of God must be liberated from every unworthy element, I do not see how we can think of him save as "More Than Personality." Personality is the highest kind of reality we know. It must be therefore the symbol by which, even though we recognize its limitations, we think of God. When we are forced to the use of symbols, we may know we are in the presence of the highest, the ineffable. We are not ascribing to God the limitations of our personalities, but because personality is the highest concept that we have, it is the least inadequate symbol of God. It is at least better than silence or non-belief. If the scientist builds up his world out of mathematical symbols, as we know he does, so we are justified in describing the spiritual aspect of the universe in the highest symbols we have. This too should be noted, that the mind and purpose immanent in the universe must be greater and not less than the achievement of the universe. If human personality is worthy of a creative process almost eternally long, then the worth and the truth, the beauty, the

goodness which personality cherishes must have their root in reality—in God. We are thus justified, even in the face of the impersonality of natural law, in thinking of Purposive Intelligence as personal.

That leads us on to the next great issue in our thought of God. Jesus has taught men to think of God under the symbol of "Father." One of the great emphases of Christian thought has been the concept that God is love. Undoubtedly that statement in the form that some people have held it, will not bear the scrutiny of facts. The misery, the suffering, the tragedies, the floods, the pestilences, which have marked the history of man, have been pointed to by many people as evidences that God cannot be love. People pray for release from suffering, or escape from grief; their prayers are not answered and they say, "God is not love." What reality is there in that conviction of the love of God? How can we relate it to the facts of life? Certainly it does not mean that God is capricious; that he is to be cajoled into being kind; that he yields to our impulses and desires; that he makes life easy for us; that he gives us our own way. It does not mean divine indulgence. In what way can we think of God as marked by love?

As we study the creative process of which we are a part we discover very early the emergence of the sentiment of love. We find the dawning of this impulse in the animal realm. J. A. Thompson in another of his books, describes mothering among animals.

> The squirrel makes a big nest of moss and twigs on the branches of a tree. The harvest mouse weaves strips of leaves into a nest fastened to the shocks of wheat. The dormouse builds a nest with moss and fibers in a low bush in the thicket. It always means mothering. Or think of the birds. There is the weaver-bird's nest dangling from the tip of the branch over-hanging a stream. There is the two-roomed clay nest of the South American oven-bird. There is the beautiful feather-nest of the eider duck made with down from the bird's own body. There is the nest of the long-tailed tit made of over two thousand feathers which the bird has gathered one by one. What industry, what skill, what patience—and not for self!

Love is the forgetting of self in the eager desire for the sake of others. It is self-forgetfulness in the passion for social well-being. It is the great integrating, coordinating power in human experience. It is to individuals what the principle of unity and concretion is to the physical universe. As the creative process has moved onward love has

reached to ever higher levels—to the supreme height of the cross! If the creative process gives such constant evidence of the presence and the value of love are we not forced to conclude that love is an inherent factor in the Mind and Purpose which are creating the universe and of the Reality that is expressed in all things?

It is to Jesus that we owe supremely this concept of divine love, this picture of God as Father, and our interpretations of this symbol would be much saner if we were more true to Jesus' picture. For Jesus, the Father was the supreme Reality, the term involving love and benevolent will; but that did not insure an easy, comfortable life for Jesus. God was love, but that did not signify that Jesus would have his own way. The love of God does not mean a guarantee of escape from pain and disaster. But it means just what it did for Jesus—that God is such a One, the universe is so created, that any one who takes the path of love, who trusts love implicitly, who lets himself go to its daring demands, even though it means pain, suffering and death, has become so completely adjusted to the will and purpose of God, has become so integrated with the universal order that his contribution will be deathless and that he himself need never fear the

malice of men. By the love of God we mean then, not a divine indulgence; by the fatherhood of God we indicate not a yielding paternity; we mean that the Immanent Spirit responds to the creative power of love; that all that is fine, that is true, that is beautiful, that is good, all that has value is meaningful to God; that those who trust the highest can rest assured that they are co-workers with God. Principal Jacks of Oxford in his valuable book "Religious Perplexities," sums it all up for us:

> All religious testimony, so far as I can interpret its meaning, converges towards a single point, namely this. There is that in the world, call it what you will, which responds to the confidence of those who trust it, declaring itself, to them as a fellow-worker in the pursuit of Eternal Values, meeting their loyalty to it with reciprocal loyalty to them, and coming in at critical moments when the need of its sympathy is greatest; the conclusion being, that wherever there is a soul in darkness, obstruction or misery, there is also a Power which can help, deliver, illuminate and gladden that soul. This is the Helper of men, sharing their business as Creators of Value, nearest at hand when the worst has to be encountered; the companion of the brave, the upholder of the loyal, the friend of the lover, the healer of the broken, the joy of the victorious—the God who is spirit, the God who is love.

So far we have come seeking to discover to what extent the facts justify us in retaining the metaphysical interpretations of past ages. And yet God is not explained! How can our puny, finite minds grasp such a God as this unfathomable universe demands? It was Chrysostom who said that the "comprehended God is no God at all." There will always be about God a mystery. He is as Otto suggests "the tremendous mystery." We have been considering those facts which require a readjustment of our thought of God, but we have not said a word yet about religion! We have discussed belief, theology, science, philosophy; but religion begins at that point where we make a personal response to these facts which we have been considering. Theology thinks of God in the third person—religion addresses him in the second person. I may pore over the details which science can bring together about Mt. Hood, I may familiarize myself with the reports of the government survey till I know every glacier and every valley. I may be familiar with all the plants and trees that grow upon its slopes, with the animal life that populates its forests. I may be familiar with the rock structure and the geological history down through the ages. I may be familiar with the potential power

which its streams contain—and all that will be good. But it is of a different order altogether from that which I experience when at sunset-time I behold the roseate glory of our snow-crested Mt. Hood etched against a turquoise sky. I lose myself in the beauty of the scene; the splendor, the grandeur of it all, flows into my soul as I stand with head bared and heart enraptured before it, as I say "What loveliness! What beauty!" Then I return to my task invigorated and jubilant, feeling that life is worth while in a world of such loveliness.

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

So it is that a discussion of God is fruitless until the individual, in awe, responds. It is not enough to know about God. There is an experience that brings one into a personal touch with reality and

it is that personal response of worship which makes one very sure of God. This is the illuminating and empowering experience of the mystic who in the fastnesses of his own soul discovers the presence of God. There are hosts of men and women for whom the divine presence is the most real thing they know. Their intellectual concepts of God may be impossible and immature, but they know that they are in touch with reality; their mystical experience does not give them any dogmatic information as to what God is—but it does furnish an assurance that he is.

I believe that we ought to think as accurately as possible about God; that we should eliminate the primitive and the unworthy concepts of deity. When we have done that we have simply prepared the way for that which is religion;—the bowing heart which grows reverently conscious of the divine presence. God is real for us only when we worship, when we bow in awe before the mystery of the universe, when in faith we see more vividly the glory of truth, the beauty of holiness, the holiness of beauty, the splendor of love; when we step outside of ourselves and see life in its universal aspects; when we look at our own little actions and attitudes in the light of the divine mind and the

transcendent purpose which has been sweeping through the ages.

We must find God—we must worship, if we would live at life's best!

> O world invisible, we view thee,
> O world intangible, we touch thee,
> O world unknowable, we know thee,
> Inapprehensible, we clutch thee.

There is reality, divinity, truth, beauty and goodness, love and life, pressing for expression through the world, through us.

> The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
> Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

Do we feel it? Are we very sure of God?

> 'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,
> That miss the many-splendored thing.

Let us miss it not. "As the hart panteth for the water brooks" so may our eager souls seek God—and whosoever seeks God with all his heart, he shall surely find him. Having found him—we can face life, not as orphans adrift in meaningless space, but as dwellers in God's universe, as sons at home in their Father's presence!

JESUS

IF OURS is a God of truth then nothing is more irreligious than to ignore or deny the facts, nothing is more faithless than to fear the facts, and nothing else more reverent than to be loyal to the facts. It was Marcus Dods who said that he who fears the facts does not believe in God. A preliminary word should be said to those who are tense with anxiety, fearful of what will happen when the light of modern science is brought to bear upon our concept of Jesus. May I suggest that we release that tension? Our purpose is fact-finding not fact-destroying. The introduction of the scientific method into the field of religion certainly will require a readjustment of some of our ideas about Jesus, but will in no way affect Jesus himself. Jesus does not need defense. The fact of Jesus' personality, its essence, its outlook and its quality needs only to be known to be valued. Men have thought that the magnitude and the glory of Jesus' personality would be endangered unless, like Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane, with the weapons of dogma and the cutting edges of their creeds they rushed to his defense. What folly! The facts

about Jesus—that is what we want! They hold no terror for the truth-seeking disciple.

We are witnessing today a remarkable renaissance of interest in the personality of Jesus. Our monthly magazines, those mercurial mirrors of popular taste, are presenting newly written lives and estimates of Jesus. More books are being written about Jesus today than ever before; more study is being devoted to him and his times. The striking thing about this renewed interest in Jesus is that it is non-theological and non-ecclesiastical. Papini, emerging from among the agnostics; Ludwig, a Polish Jew; Klaussner, also a Jew; Keable, a radical churchman; Middleton Murry, a man of letters—these are some of the men who within the last decade have voiced in unconventional terms their interest in the personality of Jesus. Stanley Jones in "The Christ of the Indian Road," assures us of India's keen interest in Jesus and his view of reality, his way of life, his scale of values. India, he tells us, is responding appreciatively and reverently to the lure of the personality of Jesus. All this indicates a rediscovery of what Stanley Jones calls the "unincrusted Christ."

Whence the incrustations that have obscured the figure of Jesus? Early in its history the Church

took the vital personality of Jesus and made him into a dogma, wrapped him in creedal cerements and buried him in a sepulchre of doctrine, made of him a shadowy, heavenly figure, hazily seen through the incense of fourth century philosophy —until the conventional concept of Jesus bears but a meager likeness to the winsome, irresistible figure of the gospels. These theological incrustations have borne through the ages the stamp of ecclesiastical approval which explains why it is that the rediscovery of Jesus is to so large an extent the work of unconventional and extra-ecclesiastical minds. Yet has it not been true that the great periods of progress in the Church have always been periods when Jesus has been in some measure rediscovered, when some unvalued or forgotten insight of his has bugled men's minds to a new advance?

Such an experience is ours in this day of rediscovery. Jesus holds a place of leadership which again and again makes great leaders cry out that we must face either "Christ or chaos"; we must either follow Jesus' way or else face social disintegration. Statements like that are significant because they rest not upon ecclesiastical decree but upon a perception of values. Indeed the whole shift in religion today, as we shall see in a later study when we con-

sider the subject of authority, is moving from a dependence upon church pronouncements and creedal declarations to clear insight into values. We are recognizing that the estimate which we put upon Jesus must rest not upon what the creeds of Nicea or of Chaldecon say, but upon the spiritual worth which we find inherent in his personality and the relationship of that worth to the inherent reality which we find in the universe.

Let us now consider the range of facts which must be taken into account in our modern valuation of Jesus. The only source to which we can go to acquaint ourselves with the personality of Jesus is the gospels, and there are many problems which arise when one desires to rediscover the mind of Jesus and the facts regarding his life.

We discover that the first three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, were not written until forty years after the events of Jesus' career. No one of them was written by an eyewitness, but each one is a collection of oral and documentary accounts. Not only was the story of Jesus dependent for decades upon verbal memory, but it comes to us in a different language from that which Jesus used. In addition to this, Paul preached, wrote his epistles and died before any one of the gospels was written,

with the result that while the gospels were still in oral form, the developing theology of the Church unconsciously colored that tradition. Even after the gospels were written the Church appointed correctors whose business it was to adapt the gospel narratives to the developing theology of the Church. In the fourth gospel we have an interpretation of Jesus in the terms of Greek philosophy about 100 A. D., marvelous in its spiritual insight, but puzzling for the historical student of the life of Jesus. All these facts reveal that the problem of getting at the truth regarding Jesus himself is not a simple one but requires a detailed study which only in recent years has the Church been either willing or able to undertake.

But we must remember that these writers were writing with a profound devotion to Jesus and with a desire to be as truthful as they were capable of being, with the result that they have given to us an account of Jesus that is substantially accurate and trustworthy, but not infallible as to detail. The gospels do furnish us a dependable portrait of the personality of Jesus, of the quality of his life, of his outlook upon the world and of his contribution to religious thinking. A fearless, historical approach to the Synoptic gospels in an effort to get behind

editorial elements and unconscious colorations, gives to one as no other study in the world can give, a sense of the living, resistless, vital personality of Jesus, a familiarity with his view of God, of man, of religion, of life. I have had occasion with groups from year to year to make that kind of a study with the constant result that Jesus, the actual Jesus of Nazareth, is a more marvelous figure at the close of the study than before.

It is well for us to note that the name of our Master is "Jesus." While the terms "Jesus" and "Christ" are in popular usage interchangeable, the word "Christ" is a title and not a name. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew term "Messiah." "Messiah" was the title under which Hebrew nationalism visualized the one who should free the Jewish people from oppression, furnish religious leadership and bring the Hebrew race to world supremacy. This title, because of its military and nationalistic aspects, constituted one of Jesus' greatest problems, for that which they expected the Messiah to do was just what Jesus was unwilling to undertake. Because he felt that he had the way of spiritual redemption for his people it appears that he accepted the title toward the end of his career. But many of us prefer to call our Master by

his name "Jesus" and reserve the term "Christ" for accurate use when considering Jesus' relation to the first century nationalistic hope. Jesus was too vital for labels. He was interested in values and not in names, in life and not in honors. The timeless quality of the insight of Jesus, his value for the twentieth century, his portrayal of the divine qualities of reality, are not dependent upon the use or the disuse of this ancient Hebrew term "Messiah" or its English equivalent "Christ."

The methods of modern historical study have for the first time in Christian history placed in our hands a means of distinguishing between the crystalline thinking of Jesus himself and the earnest but sometimes muddled musings of his interpreters. This is what happened. In history appeared this unique figure before whose insight men bowed, to whose leadership they turned with joy, whose personality they found making God more clear to them. Men sought to explain Jesus, to interpret him, and we find them unfailingly making those interpretations in the terms of their own thought and in keeping with their view of the world. They turned to philosophy, to religious symbolism and took toll of those fields in order to find adequate pictures to describe what Jesus meant to them.

The Jewish Church leaders interpreted Jesus in the terms of the old sacrificial and propitiatory system which Jesus himself had completely discarded as an unworthy relic of the past. The Roman Christians introduced elements of kingship and of power, foreign to the mind of Jesus. The Greek Christian scurried through the fields of Greek philosophy to find ideas with which to adorn the brow of the Master. So it was that not only in the first century but in the fourth and the fifth, in their ardent efforts to describe Jesus, the Church Fathers, utilized the philosophical concepts of their own time, the framework of a God dwelling above the dome of their little earth. It is tragedy, from the standpoint of the historical student, to see these early Christians puttering about putting up their flimsy scaffolding which only obscured the transcendent clarity of Jesus' pure religion of the spirit.

Yet we should realize that these early explanations of Jesus were not as one has said "the plebian offspring of intellectual flabbiness." We must honor these men for their devotion to the Master and for the earnestness with which, equipped as they were with meager philosophical concepts, they tried to explain the mystery of Jesus' unparalleled personality. I only wonder if we are worthy of

them, if we are capable of a similar insight into the worth of Jesus and, if we have a similar courage for translating that worth into the terms of our own thought life in the twentieth century. Can we do for our age what they did for theirs?

In our desire for facts we try both to get back to the mind of Jesus and to evaluate without ecclesiastical bias the doctrines of the Church; but there is another field of reality that needs to be taken into consideration—the impact of the personality of Jesus upon the ages. There is no escaping the fact that in all history there has been on other personality which has signified more and has left such a far-reaching impact upon the thoughts, ideals and experiences of men. "The simple record of three short years of active life, has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists," said Lecky, the historian. Instead of the influence of Jesus decreasing with the years, it has increased. Truly the crucifixion did not put an end to Jesus. The influence of that personality has changed cowards into heroes, selfish and anti-social lives into servants of their fellowmen. Men have found new and noble incentives through the touch of the personality of Jesus. They have found a

way of escape from the habits that have enshackled them. Artists, poets, musicians, architects, have found in their thought of Jesus that which has enlisted their finest efforts and enabled them even to surpass their dreams. Jesus is woven into the texture of history. Renan expressed the idea in a different figure: "Thou wilt become to such a degree the cornerstone of humanity that to tear thy name from this world would be to shake it to its foundation." Whatever may be our explanation of Jesus it must be adequate to explain the power which the personality of Jesus has possessed in the experience of men.

These are the facts, how are we to explain them? We turn now from fact to interpretation, from science to philosophy. In the terms of modern metaphysics, how can we explain Jesus?

The Church has always held that Jesus was both human and divine. It has fought to maintain the real humanity of Jesus and he who does not believe that Jesus was a normal human being with like passions with ourselves has parted company with the thinking of the Church. The Church has also held that Jesus was divine, that his was a unique relationship with God which makes his life a window looking into the divine nature. My personal belief

is that the Church has been right in holding with an unwavering loyalty to those two convictions, both of the humanity and the divinity of Jesus. Men have held, I believe, to both convictions on the ground of facts and experience. Anyone who studies the records of the life of Jesus finds abundant evidence of his normal humanity, and anyone who sees the impact of that normal personality upon human lives, the result of his insight, will feel that here is a personality fed by underground streams, in contact with the vast resources of divine reality. The Church has been sound in holding both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus. But like the man of whom it was said that he held more right beliefs for more wrong reasons than any man alive, the Church has become entangled in morasses of faulty reasoning in its effort to explain and to philosophize its faith.

The Christology of the past, as expressed in the creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon, has been built upon a number of concepts which we can no longer hold today. First, it rested upon a non-analytical approach to the gospel records, with a resultant failure to distinguish between Jesus' own self-consciousness and the colored ideas of his interpreters. This indefiniteness must no longer confuse our

thinking. Also, it involved an ancient and pre-scientific concept of God fitted to the scale and frame of a tiny earth-centered universe. A third element in the thinking of the ancient Church which we have had to discard has been the concept of God as separated from the universe, so that if he is to have a part in it, to reveal himself, he has to break into it from outside the normal order. Intervention, not flowering forth from within, was the ancient idea of divine activity. Another attitude which is no longer tenable was the strongly stressed contrast between God and man. The Hebrew religion emphasized this predominately: the human and the divine were thought to be mutually exclusive.

Our concept of God and his relationship to the universe is different today. God is not outside this world process. He is within it. He is the power expressed in every law, the push upward in every creative movement. He works through normal processes and finds the highest expression of his will and being through the highest reality that we know—personality: so that the finer humanity becomes the more adequately does it embody the mind of God. Indeed if we wanted really to understand God, the nearest that we could come would be an ideal human personality. Humanity and divinity,

God and man, have a basic likeness such that ideal humanity would be the fullest possible revelation of the moral qualities of the divine. This new concept of the inherent kinship between man and God we really owe to the insight of Jesus, with his belief that the perfect character of God is in some way possible for man. "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

How are we in the thought terms of our own day to describe this human-divine figure? First, we recognize the normal humanity of Jesus, the reality of his temptations, the genuineness of his puzzlements. It is only as we are aware of this normal humanity that the moral grandeur of Jesus' personality can emerge. If Jesus was not normal, truly a man, if he knew all things, if he was incapable of taking the wrong choice, if he knew automatically all things that were to happen ahead of time, then the whole career of Jesus becomes a bit of melodrama. He becomes a form which, marionette-like goes through its part. The struggle of the wilderness and of Gethsemane lose their reality! You and I in the anguish of our temptations and the agony of our trials would look at the career of Jesus and say, "But he doesn't understand. His sufferings were not genuine. He was not really tempt-

ed." The moral grandeur of Jesus necessitates a genuine humanity like yours and mine.

But that is only one side of the picture. We find Jesus of Nazareth possessed of a spiritual insight which up to that time had never been possessed, an insight which transcends any that has since been achieved. Jesus in his devotional life experienced his Father's presence with a clarity and a vividness which illumined his entire career. Thus prepared he came to his people telling them from out the experience of his own heart, that God was a Father. In the quiet of his meditation he discovered the will of God for his own life. To the will of God he unreservedly dedicated himself so that his life become a picture of that will. That will involved love and goodness, truth and beauty in human terms. These high values which were the essence of creative purpose, Jesus beheld and proclaimed. But he not only proclaimed them; here is the marvel of it—and before the significance of this marvel the recorded miracles of Jesus dwindle into minor importance—he embodied those values in himself! Goodness, not as outward conformity, but as an inner quality he possessed. A passion for truth and reality thrilled his life. The beauty of the world impressed him and awakened that interior

beauty which showed in a winsomeness which earnest lives felt. Transcendently was his personality and life the embodiment of unadulterated love, purely passionate, devoted to men, poured out with abandon. We find him possessed of an insight into the realities of religion such that he sloughed off the formal, the primitive, the external factors of Judaism, conserved the spiritual insight of its prophets and led on into the discovery of that way of life in which man and God in perfect fellowship could create a better world, which he called the Kingdom of God. And Jesus has done all this with such adequacy and with such sufficient degree of finality that nineteen centuries have recognized and bowed before the sublimity of his personality and sought to experience the quality of life his insight has revealed.

What does it all signify? To me it means—and I am now giving you my own convictions regarding the divinity of Jesus—that we have in Jesus a personality that embodies with a transcendent fulness the universal principle of creative love. The creative purpose of God is functioning here. Paul put it well: "God was in Christ." The immanent value-establishing power of the cosmos has emerged, has flowered forth supremely in Jesus. The life and

personality of our Master are evidences for us of the values which inhere in reality. The divinity of Jesus is not quantitative; it is qualitative. In Streeter's words: "If life instinct with love is the essence of reality, then Jesus is a portrait of reality—as Paul says 'the image of in the invisible God.' It is in no impoverished sense that we recite the ancient phrase, 'Christ is of one substance with the Father;' and to describe him we shall find no words more true than 'the son of God.' "

Many people forget that in this discussion of the relationship of Jesus and God, the real heart of the matter is not so much the divinity of Jesus as it is the character of God. We must remember that the character of Jesus is the known and the character of God is what we are seeking to discover. Therefore the most significant question is not, "is Jesus divine?" but, "is God Christlike?" Is the spirit that rules the world, at heart, the quality that we find in Jesus? Principal Cairns of Aberdeen has put it this way: "The Christian confession of Jesus as Son of God is not only a confession about Christ, it is an affirmation of faith in the Christlikeness of Almighty God." If you believe that Jesus bore a spiritual relationship to the divine so intimate that his life is a forthshowing of the nature of

God and the creative purposes of the divine mind, then you hold the essence of that which has been, historically, the belief of the Church. You have found indeed, as John puts it, that he who has seen Jesus has seen the Father. You believe that in Jesus is revealed that way of life by which men can fulfill the will and plan of God. You will feel that any one who flippantly remarks: "O Jesus is just a man like ourselves," has wholly missed the significance and value of Jesus and that the Church has been historically right in exalting Jesus as a genuine revelation of God.

One thing more remains to be said and it is of supreme importance. The vital question after all is not our theory about Jesus but our personal response to him. It is not what you *believe* about him, but what you *do* about him that counts. "How strange that men have made the test of Christianity, one's attitude on the metaphysics of the fourth century and not one's response to the eternal life values of Jesus!" Men have had sadly mistaken ideas about Jesus and yet have responded to his mastery and the quality of his life. Others have had very conventional and orthodox ideas about Jesus and yet have failed pathetically to catch the spirit of his life. "Not every man that saith

unto me, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." This is the important thing. Your interpretation of Jesus is an intellectual matter. It is the result of your training and background. The gospel of Jesus does not involve primarily such things as these. The gospel of Jesus is the good news regarding a way of life, of living spiritually, lovingly, gallantly at life's best, in cooperation with an ever-present Father of love. A man may reject all the dogmas about Jesus, yet there Jesus stands a fact transcending the breakdown of all explanations, holding out the lure of life's best: "The Master still of all who really surrender to the highest that they knew."

This is just what Stanley Jones is pleading for —not a quibbling over interpretations of Jesus, but a presentation in living terms of the personality of Jesus with all his winsomeness and his insight. If the heart of our faith is sound, that there is a genuine integration between Jesus and the immanent creative purpose of God, it follows that when Jesus is presented, altogether free from theological impedimenta, the very nature of his personality will awaken in men a recognition that his way of life is the highest way, that he does point out the pathway along which mankind must move for hope and

salvation. Jesus is what the Church has always called him, the Saviour, for down through the ages in the mastery of Jesus, men have found that inner change of which Tolstoi's confession furnishes us effective illustration. "Five years ago I came to believe in Christ's teaching, and my life suddenly changed. I ceased desiring what I had wished before, and I began to desire what I had never wanted previously. What formerly had seemed good now appeared bad, and what had seemed bad now appeared good. The direction of my life and my desires shifted. Good and bad changed places."

Men have divergent theories about the personality of Jesus. For some of you this study of Jesus will prove unsatisfactory because it does not rest upon certain phases and concepts with which you are familiar. To others of you it has not gone far enough toward iconoclasm. For others, I hope, it has proved helpful in correlating the values of past belief and experience with the modern scientific position. But whatever we believe regarding the interpretation and explanation of Jesus' life—there comes to us the challenge of the personality of Jesus himself.

How far are we willing to go in following him? To what extent will we consent to remodel our

lives after the pattern he has given us? Are we willing to renounce all for the sake of the Kingdom of God? Are we ready to live with no other motive save love, cost what it may? Are we prepared to pay the price of sheer goodness? Are we eager that our homes, our business, our political activity, our recreation be completely centered in the pure, human, brotherly values which Jesus has revealed? These are the tests of loyalty. By these fruits shall men know that we are his disciples. Not by theological conflict but by Jesus-like living can we evidence our allegiance to our Master and present his gospel of love to the world.

AUTHORITY

WE ARE undertaking the discussion of a subject to which the average one of us has given little thought: we take it for granted like air or sunshine. Nevertheless the problem of authority is so basic in religion that in these days of readjustment it must be thoroughly considered.

The modern temper is disinclined to accept any authority at all. It does not defy, it simply ignores. It frequently cuts lose from all moorings, acknowledges no fixed points. Religious authority, moral principles, civil laws—all are looked upon as relics of the past which should not be allowed to hamper one's freedom. The result is a headlong plunging —no one knows whither. Yet, in spite of the fact that the old authorities are gone, there is just as great need as ever for control and for guidance. Where can these be found? Are we to live without authority, or is there to be found some higher authority which will survive the discrediting of the old sanctions?

Let us recognize at the outset that the history of progress has been a movement from authority toward freedom, from external compulsion to inner

control. It is not necessary to discuss at length the added freedom which the animal has above the plant, man above the animal, and civilized man above the savage. From blind subservience to physical law man has moved onward till he has been able by voluntary cooperation with law to establish a realm of righteousness and love—not from necessity but from desire.

We trace the same progress in the history of the child. In the early years the child is under the authority of the parents. They determine the child's behavior. Their commands and prohibitions are necessary to save the child in his ignorance and impetuousness, from grave danger. But the purpose of the wise parent is to reduce authority to a minimum and to awaken in the child that sense of values and that inner control by which the child will select the right through inner desire rather than through compulsion. The purpose of education is to create within the individual this quality of life which will make authority unnecessary.

We recognize, I believe, that this is also our ideal for society,—that we shall awaken in men a spirit so devoted to justice, to goodness, to truth, and to brotherhood that the necessity of legislation is minimized. Laws are made for those who are not wise

enough, or good enough, to seek the well-being of all men. Authority must be evoked for the sake of those who are still too immature to control themselves for the highest ends. But we are seeking to create the inner incentives of a mature idealism. We are a long way from our goal, but that does not change the fact of the direction in which we are moving, nor does it invalidate the principle that progress is from external authority to inward vision.

All this applies very intimately to religion. Where in this realm are we to turn for authority? This is a field supremely in which men want assurance; indeed religion grew out of the human desire for security in a puzzling world. Where is certainty to be found? Certainty in religion comes to man through one or the other of two channels—external authority or inner experience. Auguste Sabatier some years ago wrote a book entitled, "Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit." That title suggests the two bases of religious certainty which we are to analyze and evaluate.

Let us first examine the principle of external authority in religion. The story of authoritarian religion is a tortuous tale. You may recall a couplet of George Meredith's:

Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life.

Yet even a dusty answer is better than no answer for those whose demand is for final assurance. The vast majority of men feel the need of some external authority upon which they can depend for reassurance in the field of religion: and ambitious ecclesiastical leaders are always ready to aid their churches in supplying that need and enhancing submission to church control. Had we time it would be interesting to consider what the psychoanalyst could tell us regarding the nature and the cause of this yearning for external authority. We may take John Henry Newman as an illustration of this type of mind. A brilliant intellect, a great preacher, a leading figure in the Church of England, in 1845 he joined the Roman Catholic Church. The reason that he did so was that he felt the need of some external and infallible authority upon which he could depend in the field of religion. Upon the shoulders of some maternal leadership he wanted to shove the responsibility of solving the problems which were haunting him. In the story of his life he said: "The position of my mind since 1845 was like coming into port after a rough sea." Newman may represent for us those, either

Protestants or Catholics, who desire the harbor of some final authority to determine for them right and wrong, true and false, orthodoxy and heresy, the valuable and the perilous. When that authority has spoken questioning ceases, doubt fades, peace and security come. There is no doubt but that this dependence upon external authority produces a certain quiet of mind, a freedom from strain, a release from questioning. I would say to those who possess this type of mind and feel this need of authority, "Hold on to it. Keep it as long as you can." Like George Fox, the Quaker who, when some one asked him if he should lay aside the sword, replied, "Hold it as long as you can," so I say, "If you feel the need of external authority, hold it, for in your present state of mind, you cannot get on without it."

Let us rehearse briefly the story of religious authority. For thirteen hundred years Christendom accepted the Roman Catholic doctine of an infallible church. Being divinely and inerrantly guided the church was able to tell the individual what to believe. Men never thought to question the official decrees of the church. There was no uncertainty, no need for investigation; indeed when the church had spoken, investigation became

sinful. For practical peace of mind this situation would be ideal, were it true.

Then came the Reformation and for the infallible church there was substituted in the seat of authority an infallible Bible. When Protestantism set the Bible as its authority it did much more than any of the reformers realized at the time. On the negative side it made possible a host of Protestant sects, each one accepting the Bible as authority but interpreting the Bible in its own way and claiming for its own interpretation divine authority. On the positive side, however, Protestantism had in it the germ of that fine religious freedom which the Roman Catholic system denied. The Protestant movement has held along with its belief in the authority of the Bible, the conviction that the interpretation of the Bible rests upon the guidance of the Spirit of God in the heart of the individual. There you have both the weakness of Protestantism from the standpoint of ecclesiastical strategy, and the glorious, spiritual sublimity of Protestant liberty. There was the germ which is blooming out four hundred years later in the new reformation of our own day—the recognition of a valid authority within the soul. Here is the essence of the religion of the spirit. Yet even though the Protestant reformers recognized

this factor within man and were therefore the forerunners of modern thought, nevertheless their thinking was bound up to the concept of an external authority. Let me give you an illustration of that in the reasoning of John Calvin, taken from his "Institutes." "How do we know that the Bible is the word of God?" he asked, and gave answer, "By the testing of the Spirit within the soul." Continuing the discussion he asked, "But how do we know that it is the Spirit of God," and replied, "By comparison with the scriptures." We recognize that this line of argument simply follows a circle, proving A by B and B by A. Calvin recognized this, too, but did not perceive as we do that it is logically indefensible. It is very convincing only to those who are already convinced.

That circle of reasoning will no longer hold for the modern mind: we must find some fixed ground outside the circle. That is what we are trying to do in our day. We follow the true Protestant position in holding that the truth of the Bible is to be tested by experience—but that experience we test and rectify by comparison with the experience of others, with facts fearlessly analyzed, with truth objectively demonstrated; that is to say we rectify experience by the scientific method. So we see that

in religion as in all fields of thought and endeavor, the final authority is the experience of the individual in his search for truth.

Nor is this so startling as the authoritarian supposes. The believer in external authority fails adequately to recognize, that an external authority has just as much authority as we individually are disposed to accord to it. Even true belief is not true for us unless we accept it as true. No authority is authoritative until we assent to it. The final appeal is to the insight, the vision, the judgment of man himself. You and I determine to just what extent we are willing to accept the authority of the Bible; when you select those parts of the Bible that are spiritually valuable and those which are meagerly so, you are bringing all claims of authority before the bar within the soul, hearing their claims and determining which you wish to accept. That is to say that the final appeal of authority is within and not without.

Let us bring this to the test of the thinking of Jesus. Jesus spoke, we read, "with authority." He did not quote Rabbi This and Rabbi That, but spoke out of the conviction that was born of his spiritual insight. He appealed to the Old Testament scriptures, but not in the manner of his con-

temporaries. They looked upon their scriptures as commands to which they must give a slavish obedience. But not Jesus. He loved the scriptures of his people and he quoted them frequently. But in what a spirit! With his insight he pierced to their inner significance, clarified their vision, intensified their dreams, vivified their hopes, completed to a circle the arc of their aspiration. The final bar of authority to which he appealed was not that of scripture. His appeal was to the hearts of living men; the experiences which the scripture described were means toward that end. Jesus appealed to the authority of the hearts of his hearers. He did not say, "believe it because of the Old Testament Scripture." He did not even say, "believe it because I say it;" rather he said, "I have experienced it, try it out in your own experience and if you find it true then accept it." Jesus never asked belief of anything which could not be tested in experience. He recognized in himself and in everyone else the authority of an inner vision resting upon personal discovery. We today accept Jesus' teachings not alone because Jesus said them, but because the things Jesus said our experience verifies as valid. Dr. Oman of Cambridge in "Vision and Authority," recently reissued, has said:

> Jesus speaks indeed with authority. He is not as the Scribes. They had authorities, but no authority. They had nothing to speak from direct, and nothing to appeal to direct. Jesus, on the other hand, speaks from man to man the truth he has seen and to which his hearers cannot be blind, unless they close their eyes. Exclusively he addresses himself to the primal spiritual authority in man—the spiritual vision which discerns things spiritual. He is not as the Scribes, precisely because when he failed there, he fell back on no other authority. On the contrary he was able to exclude every other appeal except an appeal to the spiritual in man. No man accepted the truth from him for any lower reason than because it had appealed to his heart as true. He had no dignity of place or office with which to impose and no material possession with which to attract. Stripped of all extraneous aid, the truth was left to be its own authority and its own appeal for the hearts made in the image of him who is true.

Certainly it was never in the thinking of Jesus that his words should be made into a rigid, legal code. His purpose was not to coerce belief, but to create insight; not to enslave men to a first century legalism, but to create in them a spirit; not to lay down a system of laws to which men must conform, but to create a sense of value and a relationship to God, a quality of human love that would

enable men not in slavish obedience but in a courageous faith to meet the problems of their own day. He pronounced truth born out of his own devotional life and bade men study it and accept it, not because he, Jesus, said it, but because it was true, and because that truth could be perceived by any truth-seeking heart. Dr. Speery has said that "Jesus never intended to relieve men of the human obligation of moral liberty. He withheld all temporal argument and force that he might let his authority rest from the first where at last it must rest in the response of the believing soul." It is obvious that Jesus himself believed in the transition from the external authority to the inner sanction.

To many people this seems like giving the whole case away. It appears to be making every man his own standard of right, every man his own judge of truth. Yet this is just what we are doing whether we admit it or not. Why are you a Protestant or a Catholic, a Republican or a Democrat, a Conservative or a Progressive? Is it not because a certain process of reasoning appeals to *you* as true? You are your own judge as to whether the facts justify one point of view or another and you would resent having any one try to determine truth for you. So the frank awareness that the final authority

is within rather than without is simply recognizing the state of affairs that already exists. No one can overcome your convictions, because they are yours and because you believe them to be true. All of which is a fact about you and not a demonstration of the validity of your conviction. Every man at last has to make up his mind regarding what he is to believe, however much of an authoritarian he may be.

The real question lies here: does he choose to accept beliefs on the authority of others without scrutiny, or does he elect to rest his position upon truth perceived by scrutiny? Here lies the test. Authoritarian religion deplores openminded investigation. The religion of the spirit, the religion of experience, seeks to perfect its judgment and improve its insight by a gladsome pursuit of truth. The truly scientific mind and the authoritarian concept of religion move in inverse ratio. The more you have of one, the less you have of the other. They are as mutually exclusive as oil and water, and they do not successfully emulsify. On the one hand is the religion of a book, of an organization, of a creed which claims finality for its statement and belief. Conformity is the great virtue and orthodoxy a prime virtue of discipleship.

Independent thought is minimized, banished so far as possible. The application of the historical method to the organization, or to the book, or to the creed, and the whole scientific approach is frowned upon, anathematized. The faith once delivered to the saints must be accepted, while spoonfuls of conventional truth are fed by prelates to members clad in bibs of submission.

But there is a very different concept of religion: it is the religion of the spirit which recognizes that nothing can be essential to religion which cannot be tested and verified by personal experience. It is a religion which conserves and glories in all that the past has contributed. It recognizes the great spiritual truths which have channelled down to us through the Bible. It values the insight of the great leaders of the church, but it accepts them not because somebody has said they were true, but because it has tested them and found by personal experience that they are valid. This concept of religion is eager and truth-seeking. It recognizes no field as exempt from investigation it seeks with an intense earnestness and with the eagerness of the fact-finder to discover the truth. It refuses either to let ecclesiastical approval weaken its fearless search, or ecclesiastical disapproval blind it to

hidden value. It is this fearless, openminded search for all the facts, the possession of this scientific spirit, this hunger to discover all the truth possible, and be loyal to it, which saves the inner authority of man from an errant and erroneous individualism. Another quotation from Dr. Oman is significant:

> Submission without inquiry, so far from being an assurance of truth and righteousness, is a failure to find anything but the shell of truth, and a rejection of life's highest duty. Truth is not true except on personal conviction. Older and wiser a brother may be, one able and willing to teach, but not one, however experienced and wise, to decide. To accept our brother's conclusions without ourselves attempting to reach them, is not to honor either God or our brother by our meekness, but to dishonor both by our slackness; and to believe that our brother wishes us to be convinced by him and not by the truth is to believe him also capable of dishonoring God. Higher position is not to be granted to any man, higher position no man should accept, than to be a fellow-seeker after God, whose greater advancement is measured by the ardor with which he seeks for others a like progress.

Thus we find that in the field of religion he who would seek the truth must be prepared for storms in the open sea. His must be difficult dis-

coveries. He must pay the price of spiritual vision. He must dare to be lonely; consent to be scorned by the conventionally-minded; he must realize that the peace which he possesses—and it is a peace which passes all understanding—is the peace of an intrepid adventurer and not the tranquility of the timid home-dweller. Religion will be for him, not the recital of a creed, but the living of a life; not soundness of historic doctrine, but courage of progressive thought; not the mumbling of a fourth century metaphysic, but a happy sharing of the spirit of Jesus in a life of love. All life will be open to adventure, to experiment, to progress. All fields of thought will be free for his ranging. All the truths of God will be beckoning him onward. And in the possession of that spirit and in the comradeship of that quest his heart will know that he is touching Reality, that truth is luring him on; and his inner conviction will give him an authority and a freedom so radiant and so satisfying that never again will he be satisfied to fall back into the ruts of unquestioning submission.

It is this concept of religion, which has no areas labelled "No thoroughfare," which flings everything open to testing and study, which challenges to a life of intrepid truth-seeking under the banner

of Jesus—it is this concept of religion which alone will appeal to the trained youth of today, eager for the realities of life.

A practical problem now confronts each one of us. We are none of us sufficiently mature to have outgrown the need of the help of others in the religious life. To some extent we all must lean on authority. We have to depend upon the thinking of others; we must build our beliefs out of what other people tell us; we have not yet progressed to the place where we can for ourselves perceive all truth. What can we do? May I recall the word suggested at the beginning? Depend upon authority if you feel the need of it. Don't let go of anything that helps you, until you find something else that gives you assurance. But keep an open mind, a plastic spirit, a living faith. Know that the truth is yet ahead and not behind. Rejoice in the work of those religious personalities who are in the lead blazing the trail for the rest of us. Thank God for them! Keep growing, learning, thinking, dreaming, praying. Seek to enter into the sanctuary of the spirit of Jesus! Keep the open and scientific mind! Live true to the highest that you know! Then you will find one day that yours is an inner experience which

is akin to the religious experience of great souls through the ages, but it will not rest for its verification upon them, for you will have found God for yourself. You will have not a beautiful yet embalmed religion of the past, but a vital living faith, a trust whose truth will give you a glorious freedom.

THE BIBLE

HAVING progressed this far in our work together we are all agreed, I trust, that truth has nothing to fear from the scientific method. Only pride and pretense, ignorance and error need dread the advent of new knowledge. As we come to the consideration of the Bible, we are surely aware that through the centuries the Bible has sufficiently demonstrated its value and its truth, so that we need have no fear that scholarship will rob it of its worth. The Bible has played too large a part in the guidance of moral and spiritual thinking, in the shaping of literary standards, in the inspiration of the artist and musician, ever to be relegated by any fact-finding individual to the realm of the non-essential. Scholarship may change men's ideas about the Bible, but the Bible itself in its moral and spiritual worth stands historically verified.

There are folk who object to modern scholarship and its work with the Bible; they have raised a great hue and cry about "tampering with the old book." What they do not realize is that scholarship is not tampering with the old book,

but is in reality giving us the old book itself. While scholarship has made impossible certain long-standing ideas about the Bible, it has taken us back to the Bible itself, back of the interpretations, back of the Middle Ages, back of the fourth century, back to the Bible as it came fresh from the minds and hearts of men through the corridors of whose souls breathed the breath of God. On the southern slopes of the mountains in central Greece some years ago stood the straggling little village of Delphi. There came archaeologists hunting for the site of the ancient city of the Delphic oracle, a city beautiful with marble temples and radiant with votive offerings. They discovered that to find those relics they would have to dig below the houses of the present city. They entreated the inhabitants to permit them to move their houses. "No," said the people, "this is Delphi. What more do you want? We have lived here as have our forefathers. We will not move." But after many promises and much urgence the modern village of Delphi was moved, and the scholars dug down below and there they uncovered the site of the ancient city with its memories of worship, its remarkable remnants of loveliness. So it is that many people today object to the work of Biblical

scholars, saying that they are destroying the Bible. Because a certain view of the Bible is familiar they want to hold to it, but they forget that the only interest that scholars have is the reverent and earnest desire to get below the debris of man-made concepts to the Bible itself. After all, "the only Bible that really counts is the Bible that the scholars are giving us," the factual Bible, the Bible that brings us closest to the experience of the great souls whose insight and dreams have there found expression.

What are some of the facts which have emerged? What are the methods of study that have shown these truths to us and which must be taken into account in our thought of the Bible? These fall into two classes. It is unfortunate from the standpoint of the popular mind that Biblical scholarship has been associated with the terms "critic" and "criticism." To the person who deals in true ideas rather than in words, that is no problem at all. But in popular thought that term "criticism" is associated with the unsympathetic, with the destructive, the hostile, and to speak of "Biblical criticism," to mention "lower critics" and "higher critics" is to many people to brand one as an enemy of the Bible. Of course this is utterly false.

Bible critics are reverent and religious scholars who are seeking the truth about the scriptures; and the lower criticism and the higher criticism" are simply two aspects of Biblical scholarship which, far from destroying the Bible, are giving us the true Bible.

The first group of facts which we have to take into consideration and which is usually described under the term "lower criticism," deals with the history of the manscripts and their translations from the time of writing down to the present. It is impossible in the compass of a sermon to give any adequate analysis of that process. Our oldest Hebrew manuscripts date back to the tenth century A. D. so that twelve to sixteen hundred years of copying by hand intervened between the original documents and our earliest manuscripts. The oldest New Testament manuscripts come from the fourth century, with at least three or four hundred years of hand copying intervening between the authors and our best versions. No one of these older documents is complete, nor are any two of them in complete agreement. Indeed in the older documents of the New Testament there are just about one hundred thousand variations of spelling, arrangement and grammatical detail. To de-

termine which are nearer to the original writing we have to depend upon our scholars who possess the technique for weighing these various readings and determining the more probable. To be sure these variations are not so important as to affect materially the teachings of the New Testament, but they corroborate the statement that the scholars are taking us back nearer to the original book itself.

We are coming to understand, too, how this book came to be compiled. Its various parts were written each to meet an immediate need, with no thought of being incorporated in an authoritative volume. Through the passage of the years certain manuscripts were found to meet the spiritual needs of men and came to be cherished, some more quickly than others. But it was not until the end of the fourth century, in 397, that the Council of Carthage determined which books should be included and which should not. Certain books were included by a bare majority and others were ruled out by a bare minority. This indicates that the authority of scripture rests not upon some prearranged, external, divine fiat, which from the very beginning united all the books into a harmony, but rather upon the test of experience:

these books did meet human needs and revealed to men the divine mind. Every Christian ought to take into account in his thinking regarding the Bible the facts which we have discerned regarding the history of its transcription, the inadequacy of its copies and the impossibility of resting upon its literal infallibility.

But there is another field of fact which must be taken into consideration when we view the Bible. It is that which is generally termed the "higher criticism" and is even more important than that which we have just been looking upon. This involves the application of the historical method to the books themselves, the writers and the conditions under which they lived. After scholars have helped us to get back as nearly as possible to the original documents, then we begin to ask other questions: Who wrote this book? If tradition mentions a certain author, we ask if the facts support the tradition. What kind of a man was he? What was his point of view? What was his experience? What were the conditions that called for the writing of this book? What did he, being the kind of man that he was and writing under such conditions, mean by this book? Is he writing history? Then how well equipped

was he for sound historical judgment? Or was he writing a sermon? Or is this poetry to be treated with the artistic sense? Or are we at this point dealing with folk-lore? Or with drama? Or with exhortation? All these questions enter into the consideration of any part of the Bible. Instead of coming to a portion of the scriptures and putting our own interpretations upon its verbal statements, we must come to every part of scripture primarily through the mind of the writer. We must find out what significance he put into it; in what sense he used these picture words; what color his experience put into his thinking. To approach the Bible in any other way than this is to be untrue to its messages and to misinterpret its truth.

The Bible leads us to the truth as its interpretation follows this historical approach, rather than as it ignores or denies it. Studying the Bible thus historically we can learn very much about its composition and its authorship which in the past has never been known. We perceive that some of the traditions which have grown up regarding authorship are not supported by the facts. We discover that the Pentateuch, for example, instead of being written by Moses, is a compilation of docu-

ments by a later hand. We find that the commandments were antedated almost a thousand years by the code of Hammurabi; that the stories in the early chapters of Genesis are paralleled by similar tales found in the folk-lore of other people besides the Hebrews. We understand that in the Old Testament we are dealing with the whole literature of a people, not only their history, but their fantastic war ballads, their lyric and erotic poetry, their songs of worship, the sermons of their prophets, the decrees of their priests, their nationalistic literature and their dreams of future glory:—all of them permeated with religious fervor, ethical insight and spiritual purpose. Nor does it destroy for us the value of the Old Testament when we discover that it includes poetry as well as chronicles and folk-lore as well as history, parable as well as preaching. Is the truth of the story of the Prodigal Son any less vivid because it is a parable? Certainly the valid spiritual worth of these Hebrew narratives is not minimized because fact and fancy are intertwined.

This is what we discover regarding our Bible: that we have here the account of the world's most spiritually-minded people making their discovery of God. It was a progressive experience. When

the Old Testament is re-arranged in chronological order and the New Testament is added to it, we have a very definite progressive process marked out before us. We find it revealing to us a gradually clarifying idea of God and a gradually spiritualizing concept of religion. It begins with very primitive ideas of a tribal God, a localized Deity, not un-akin to the primitive religions of other people. But as we move forward through the Old Testament we find growing the unique contribution of Judaism to the religious thinking of the world—ethical monotheism. Yet this was often clothed in primitive phraseology. Then came the prophets, the greatest religious thinkers of the world up to that time. They saw the spiritual essence of religion and sought to free it from its external trappings and place it on higher ethical grounds. We then see religion coming to its highest spiritual expression in the personality and teachings of Jesus. We find through his eyes our idea of God freed from the childish and immature concepts of his predecessors; through the eyes of Jesus we see God, the Spirit, marked by love and goodness, One who we may properly picture as Father.

Now what are we to think of those concepts

of God which we find in the Old Testament; the God who was supposed to command the Israelites to dash out the brains of babies against the stones, the God who walked in the garden in the cool of the evening, the God who bartered with men, the God who was angry and jealous, the God who repented, the God who would not permit Moses to look upon his face, but would permit him to look upon his back, the God who commanded David to take a census and then punished the people because he did it? What are we to think of all these details? Are they pictures of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus? Are we to think of these stories as the divinely revealed, infallible portrait of God? Or are we to conceive of them as the earnest, but inadequate concept of God held by a primitive people whose grasp of truth was inadequate but held the promise of greater truth yet to be perceived?

Permit a vivid and personal illustration. A few mornings ago in our family prayers we read the story of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac. What would a wife do—one of you here this morning—if her husband were to come home some night and say: "God has commanded me to take our only son up to Council Crest and kill him as a sacri-

fice"? You cringe at the thought; you would know that the man was insane. For you are sure that any man who believes that God would tell him that, does not really know God. Certainly the God whom Jesus reveals to us would not now and by his very nature never was capable of giving that kind of terrific command to any man. What do we have then in this story of Abraham? It is an account that come down to us from the days when men's minds were outgrowing the concept of human sacrifice. Ancient men believed honestly that their gods did want them to sacrifice their children. The gates of the Hittite cities were built on the bones of the babies of the cities' leading men. But there came a time when men began to see more clearly and to realize that the spiritual Deity desired no such sacrifice. So in the story of Abraham and Isaac we have a primitive tale which reflects that very significant, wholly true and progressive step in the religious experience of mankind. It was that significance that I was eager a few mornings ago that my children should get. I would not have them get the impression that the God of Jesus whom I want them to know and to worship, ever really wanted Abraham to kill his boy. I would rather they

would believe anything regarding this story than that blasphemous picture of Deity. I would rather they would read that as a folk-tale picturing a true experience in the race as folk-tales do, than to have them believe something like that about God whom I want them to worship and to love.

Certainly the essence of our Christian thinking is that in Jesus we have our clearest picture of God and that all those concepts of Deity which in the Old Testament precede Jesus or in the New Testament succeed him and which do not harmonize with that which we find in his life, must be inadequate and unworthy. All that is beautiful and valid in the Old Testament finds its summation in him. All that is true and enduring in the New finds in him its impetus. Jesus is the peak of the Bible and the picture of him which we have in this great religious book of ours is the Bible's supreme contribution to the thinking, the faith and the improvement of the world. And certainly modern scholarship, as it has turned the light of its study upon the gospel records, has told us more about Jesus, helped us to see him with greater clarity, to understand his motives and to appreciate his contributions to the religious life of the world. We read that when he went into

the synagogue at Nazareth he read from the scriptures, that he *closed the book* and they all *fastened their eyes upon him*. There is the function of scripture. It is not supremely important. It is subordinate, if you fix your eyes on Jesus!

The question will arise at this point, what about inspiration? Is the Bible inspired? The inspiration of the Bible is to be tested pragmatically, not theoretically. The Bible is inspired: just as inspired as it has demonstrated itself to be. If by inspiration we mean that the Bible was dictated word for word by God, certainly the facts will make that point of view impossible. Let us try to think clearly; let us realize when we speak of an inspired book, we really have in mind the inspired men who wrote the book. A book is simply a physical object. The words of the book are just dead pictures. An utterance is merely a matter of air waves. The only thing that can be inspired, if we are speaking literally, is a personality. The Bible is an inspired book because it contains the utterances of inspired men.

Now what do we mean by inspired men? By inspired men we signify those who by a clarifying religious experience with God have been able to perceive spiritual truth with more clarity than

others. That is both a human and a divine process. From man's standpoint it is discovery, from God's standpoint it is revelation. The two are interdependent. The creative indwelling Divine Spirit seeking the expression of truth and man hungering after reality, are simply two aspects of one process. It is the divine passion for revelation that creates in men the restless passion for discovery. And the result is the growing spiritual insight of men into truth. In every age men have felt God and have described that experience in the clearest language they had. Then with the development of their intelligence and the improvement of their phraseology, their concepts of God have grown more mature, more spiritual, more true. In the intimate experience of Jesus we have the high-water mark of both discovery and revelation.

Is the Bible inspired? To be sure! Does it not give you religious truth? Does it not perform a religious function in your life that no other book performs? That demonstrates in most practical fashion that you are here touching truth. Coleridge's words may well do for us: "It is because the Bible finds me, finds me at deeper depths and meets my highest moral and spiritual needs as does

no other book, that I believe it to be divinely inspired." The Bible has come to us white-hot out of life, out of the experience of men and women who have found reality. To be sure they expressed that vision in the terms of their own day. They had their own idea of the flat earth, and their antique physiology. They were ignorant of the laws of the mind, untrained in the scientific evaluation of historical evidence, and they wrote under the limitations of their own thought-processes. But within the narrow banks of those mental and philosophical restrictions there flowed a torrent of spiritual power which we with our broader banks of fluid intelligence have often missed. There is a power there which we need. We cannot go back to their narrow vision of the world, but we can share their experience, grasp their truth and thrill with their power. It is this religious function which the Bible has to perform for us and it is in some measure at least from lack of contact with these great spirits and their imparted truths that our religion is not more potent and our faith more victorious.

Gone then is the Bible whose isolated texts may be used for complex casuistry; gone is the Bible which may be treated as a hunting ground

for anti-scientific arguments. Gone is the day when we can adduce from the Bible arguments against the advance of knowledge and of truth. Gone is the Bible which is considered the final word in geology or biology or any scientific field. Gone is the day when a man can close his eyes, open the Bible, put his finger on a text and read God's advice for him. Gone is the day when the verses of the Bible can be fitted together, in picture-puzzle fashion, regardless of their setting, to construct a theology.

But won for all time is the Bible written on the human hearts of great children of God. Gained at last is the Bible of insight, of vision, spiritual truth. Won is the Bible that has, if not the certainty of the census report, the more valuable certainty of the story of the Prodigal Son. Won is the Bible which is freed from the inadequate thinking of primitive people and is the conveyor of the timeless truth of God to our age. Won is the Bible which shows us Jesus in the glory of whose face we see the image of the Father. The Bible which scholars and the new knowledge have given to us is a greater Bible, a more glorious Bible, a truer Bible than men ever had before. It has come to us from the reverent study of clear-

sighted scholars and happy are we to be the recipients of their work. There is no describing the greater joy, the greater freedom, the greater insight, the greater sense of victory which the new view of the Bible affords us. It is a view which calls for more intelligence, more insight, more effort; but it abundantly repays in spiritual results.

Such is the book which the new knowledge has given to us. We come now to the practical question: are we going to use it? The peril of new knowledge lies right here: that we shall not heed its challenge, that the new insight which has been afforded us will leave us languid, that after we have seen the truth, we shall fall back in the same old weary ruts. But that is for everyone of us to determine. Here in this book is the truth of God calling to us in the voice of Jesus: "Come and follow me." The real test is not whether we see the truth, the real test is what we do with the truth when we see it. May we be not only truth-seekers, but truth-finders and truth-expressers? Having read understandingly and intelligently with the eyes of faith, these words which from the heart of God through the hearts of men have been transcribed for us, may we ourselves become living epistles of that truth, known and read of all men?

SIN

WHAT a variety of opinions we have today regarding sin! Our preachers are denouncing sin in no uncertain terms; on the other hand we have the statement of Sir Oliver Lodge that modern man is not interested in the question of sin. Isadora Duncan voiced her assurance that there is no such thing as sin; then the president of a liberal theological seminary appeals for more preaching of "damnation." We no sooner hear a Christian Scientist deny sin's existence than we are confronted with a man whose life is made miserable by the conviction that he has committed the unpardonable sin! Amid this confusion and welter of voices and sentiments, the thing for us to do is to address ourselves very calmly and thoughtfully to the facts. It is difficult for a group of religious folk to do this because our thinking on this subject is such a medley of ancient, mediaeval and modern ideas. We are so often victimized by terms; if a man uses the customary words we accept his ideas; if his phrases are unfamiliar we assume that his thinking is false. Without being thus enslaved by terms or bowing to the

tyranny of conventional statement, what are we in the twentieth century to think of the problem of sin?

As has been intimated, the Church's doctrine of sin has come down to us from an ancient day—a day when men's concept of God was primitive, their understanding of social trends meager and their comprehension of psychological law practically nil. It would not be surprising if our new knowledge required a complete reorganization of our attitudes toward sin, and it may be that the failure to make this reorganization accounts in some measure for the confusion of voices in our day.

What are some of the new facts which have affected our thinking on the subject of sin? First there is the recognition that our moral code is the product of social experience arrived at by the trial and error method and is not an arbitrary, external decree committed to man by God. We are aware that this moral code has evolved and that it is still evolving. Our ideas of right and wrong, we now perceive, are rooted not in an external and arbitrary will, but in the very nature of human experience. This has made our whole approach to the

problem of conduct practical, personal and social, rather than theological.

In the second place we recognize that sin cannot be inherited. Of course, there is an intimate relationship between individuals so that the results of one man's sins are felt in the lives of others. But that is a very different thing from the old concept of original sin, which meant that a child was born guilty. That idea which Augustine created is quite untrue to fact as well as inherently unethical. A man may suffer from the wrongdoing of another, but he cannot be held guilty or blameworthy of another's conduct in which he has no part.

Another thing which we have come to recognize is that the exaggerated sense of sin for which the ministers of the old school were pleading is morbid and abnormal. We are appalled by the method of religious education employed by the minister who told with elation of how his little six-year old girl came to him and said, "Daddy, I am a sinner, lost in sin; what must I do to be saved?" That sense of sin which kept Bunyan in misery for years and which drove Cowper out to commit suicide, is a mental malady and not a spiritual asset.

Another element that has affected our thinking on the subject of sin has been our insight into hu-

man nature with the resultant understanding of the causes of conduct. We perceive that people's actions are often the result of the conditions that have surounded their lives so that to hold a person blameworthy without taking these causes into account is as unjust as to believe it sinful for the Chinese to be born yellow, or Caucasians to be born white. We see that some types of conduct are the result of physical factors, others are the result of mental and nervous conditions. To ignore these in estimating behavior is both unsound and dishonest. Carlyle said of one who had deceived him: "Poor devil. If we knew how he has come to be what he is, we should not be so hard on him." Certainly the harsh, unfeeling, cruel judgments which Puritan and Victorian moralists pronounced upon the violators of moral conventions are not tenable today. We know too much about the factors that contribute to evil actions, to despise wrongdoers so summarily.

Let us make a fresh, factual approach to this problem, realizing that we are dealing with realities which lie deeper than words. Harry Elmer Barnes has appealed for a renaming of evil; in this way he suggests "sin will vanish from the earth." Is that true? Can sin be exorcised by the dropping

of a name? Let us note certain grim realities of life which are not less real, nor less terrible, when we drop the word "sin" and use less ugly terms.

When a man views the world in which we live he sees much of disorder, of misery and of chaos. He discerns that just as there are diseases which limit and ruin the body so there are disorders of personality which blight and blast and deaden, so also there are social maladies which work their ruin upon humanity. These are terrible facts patent to every observer, whether or not he cares to use the term "sin" to describe them.

Let us look first at the disorders of the individual. What are the factors which hamper personality and retard its growth? No one of us is perfect; what are the detracting elements? You can run them over: pride, selfishness, jealousy, ignorance, prejudice, inferiority, exaggerated self-esteem, blindness to truth, lustful desires, deception. We are all familiar with the existence of these many elements which hold men back from life at its best. Of some of them in ourselves we are aware, of some of them we are unconscious. But they work their ruin whether we recognize them or not. Indeed the more unaware we are of their presence, the more perilous they become.

When we turn to the consideration of society we find that the maladjustments of individuals work collectively to produce misery and catastrophe. What the psychologist shows us about the disorders of a personality, the sociologist shows us about the maladies of society. We find humanity honeycombed with countless activities, trends, impulses, which make perfect society impossible, which hamper the achievement of a better world and vitiate the highest dreams of men. We can mention a few of them as typical. Group greed, class snobbishness, social ostracism, national imperialism, group suspicion, strife, injustice, poverty, war—these all are the enemies of social development, the shackles that hold us from a better world.

Summing it all up we find in the world lust and greed, hatred, ambition and selfishness: terrible, awful factors which take an unspeakable toll of grief and anguish. Go back to Aeschylus and see pictured the misery, the nemesis of anti-social living! Read Shakespeare, "Macbeth," "Richard the Third," and see the personally and socially ruinous trail of evil living. Or come to something as recent and as familiar as Eugene O'Neill's "Strange Interlude," and you will see the unsmiling heartbreak of unworthy, unwise, and selfish actions.

You do not need to go outside the horizon of human experience to behold the heinousness and the havoc of unsocial activities.

In the penitentiary is a vicious and hardened criminal. His wife and mother dead of broken hearts! His family cared for by others! A trail of ruined lives of girls and little children he has left behind. He has stolen; he has murdered. Here he sits condemned for life. I am not so much interested in the name you apply to his conduct, but I know that here is a man whose whole life is a danger to society. His career has bruised and blasted whatever it has touched. He is a symbol of a whole field of social facts which we cannot possibly ignore.

That is sin. Sin is the theological term we apply to these ever-present, personal and social maladies with which the psychologist and the sociologist are constantly dealing even though they do not use religious terminology. Sin is the word we use when we think of these evils from the standpoint of an intelligent, benevolent God, whose creative purpose includes all that is true and good, beautiful and loving. These are the blasting and bitter foes of that which is noble and divine.

The conventional ideas of sin need to be made

more intelligent and more realistic. To hear some religious people talk you would think that the great sins were swearing, smoking, card playing, dancing and theatre going. To others the sins of greatest moment are the sins of the flesh. Many feel that breaches of church discipline, or violation of Sabbatarian conventions are sins of supreme significance. We need to remind ourselves that these are but petty factors in social progress; that the great perils, the sins of importance are the ills which the social scientist points out to us—greed on the grand scale of modern finance, the enthronement of pride and enmity in place of love and trust and brotherhood, the ignorment of human rights, the devastation of liberties, the thwarting of justice, the indifference to need, the minimizing of personality, the horror of war, absence of a passion for social improvement, the cult of materialism—these are the sins that thwart and delay the Kingdom of God—these are the ills that should give us concern!

Jesus helped men to think more clearly about sin; I wonder if we are willing to be true to him! While Jesus never condoned the sins of the flesh, they were not the ills against which he spoke most intensely. Jesus was most concerned with the sins

of the spirit, with pride and avarice, with intolerance, self-righteousness, hypocrisy and selfishness. Jesus saw that these sins of respectability ate into the soul of man with a greater destructiveness than did fleshly sins. Whatever was the enemy of life at its best for either the individual or the social order, was something from which Jesus was eager to liberate men. His ideals were the abundant life for the individual and the kingdom of God for society, and any enemy of either, any detractor from either goal was a menace which Jesus sought to overcome.

We shall be helped at this point if we draw a very clear distinction between the act and the attitude of the individual who performs the act. The word "sin" has been used to cover both the act and the attitude. If, however, we analyze the matter carefully shall we not see that while the act has its far-reaching and perilous result, nevertheless that which exactly we mean by "sin" is the quality of the individual who performs the act? Sin is a state of mind in a person. A moral quality can inhere only in a person. Objects may be painful or perilous, acts may be anti-social; but they cannot be blameworthy. Only self-conscious personality can be sinful—if we use language with strict accuracy.

The reason that it is well for us to draw this distinction is that we may understand where we are to look for escape from sin. Acts can never be forgiven, personalities can. There is no power on earth or heaven which can reverse a performed act and make it unperformed. A man who has taken the life of another may completely reverse his personal attitude and become a radiant and beautiful friend of his fellowmen. But the man he murdered remains dead. It is the man who is forgiven and not the act. Sins then are not objective acts which pile up after their performance and can be mechanically heaped upon another individual who by some sacrificial act of his can accomplish their abolition, or blotting out. Religious language, inexactly used, frequently involves this idea. As a matter of fact such is not the case at all. Acts may be terrible anti-social realities which call for legal action—but sin is the quality, the selfish, cruel attitude of the individual who performs those acts. Therefore whatever is done about sin, must be done in the field of personality; if forgiveness is to be gained it concerns a change in the life of the individual, and not in the handling of one's past misdeeds. Thus we see that sin in its essence is a life attitude—sin is the quality of that person who

is falling below the highest and the noblest; sin is the quality of that life which is failing to grow, which is not true to truth, which is not loyal to love, which is contented with mediocrity and does not yearn for the heights.

If we consider sin in such terms as these, then we all must echo the plea of the penitent prodigal, "Father, I have sinned." We all of us fall short of that which we might achieve; we fail to do our utmost for the welfare of humanity; we practice sabotage in the kingdom of God. We all should have such a sense of sin that we are aware of our failure to achieve God's will for ourselves and for society. That sense of sin must not be morbid, nor such as to produce an overwhelming sense of unworthiness or inability to overcome. The old haunting sense of overpowering guilt encountered the law of reverse effort—the harder one tried to overcome sin, the greater its hold upon one. A consciousness that we have not lived up to our possibilities, that we have thwarted the divine plan, we need to stimulate us to better living; but that sense of sin is to spur us on, not to be brooded over. Matthew Arnold has a good word for us:

> Sin is not a monster, to be mused on, but an impotence to be got rid of. All thinking about it, be-

yond what is indispensible for the firm effort to get rid of it, is waste of energy and waste of time. We then enter that element of morbid and subjective brooding, in which so many have perished. This sense of sin, however, it is also possible to have not strongly enough to beget the firm effort to get rid of it.

Jesus said that he came to seek and to save the lost. The term "lost" had for Jesus a simple naturalness which was quite devoid of the theological implication which the Church has appended to it. "Lost" to Jesus did not signify hell-bent folk, but rather bewildered people who had lost their way. They had gotten confused in the byways, had become entangled with the lesser things of life and were thrashing around, restless, dissatisfied, rebellious, because they had not found the best way of life. And there you have the description of hosts upon hosts of our modern folk. It is said that they have no sense of sin, but they have its counterpart, a sense of futility. Life has for them no goal, no transcendent significance. They have no vision of the best which lures them on ceaselessly. The highest for themselves and the highest for society they have not glimpsed; they are just wandering around, poor, puzzled, selfish, foolish, lustful folk who do not really know what

life is about. That was why Jesus, though the foe of sin, loved sinners; that was why he had compassion on men—because they were unshepherded. He felt about men's bewildered lives as you and I would feel about a child that had been separated from its parents in a crowd. I do not know how you feel about thieves and perverts and criminals. Perhaps you feel bittered and resentful and cry for their blood. For myself I cannot feel so. My heart aches for them as for those who have lost their path in the tangled forest of modern life. Here they are, capable every one of them of living as children of God, capable of working for the kingdom of God and they have missed the way!

Let us sum up now our modern view of sin. The highest welfare of the individual, the redemption of society, we Christians believe are the goal of God's creative process. Therefore every thought, every word and every act which builds goodness and righteousness and truth and beauty and love into the world is an act of cooperation with God. And every act, every word, every thought, that is hateful or malicious, that is cruel or deceitful, that holds harm or gloom, is an act which hampers the work of God and thwarts his will: toward such menacing realities as that we dare not take an at-

titude of indifference. That is why religion deals with sin and is always vitally concerned with some process of salvation which will enable the individual and society to grow out of their limitations toward the freedom and the beauty of perfection, toward the fulfillment of the plan of God.

SALVATION

HAVE you ever been buttonholed by a zealous individual who has assailed you with the question, "Are you saved?" You will have an interesting but a trying experience if you ask such a person to describe literally and realistically what he means. Ask him to forego all figurative language, all theological terminology and to decribe in scientific, exact terminology what that query signifies. Of course he will not be able to do it, for he does not think in those terms. He will only come to the conviction that you are not among the saved and that most assuredly he is.

"Salvation" is a word with a theological tang which is apt to make it rather unwelcome and unreal to the modern mind. It has been so constantly interpreted in terms of heaven and hell. The very word itself calls to the minds of some people the preaching of men like Jonathan Edwards, who sought to save souls by the terrifying portrayal of bodies writhing in infernal flame. Thomas Aquinas said, "that the saints may enjoy their beatitude more richly, a perfect sight is granted them of the punishment of the damned." Such is the theolog-

ical atmosphere which the term "salvation" suggests to some people. Being saved is escaping the penalties of the pit and getting to go to heaven. This desire to be saved and to go to heaven when we die has been the basis of pulpit appeal for many generations.

According to this point of view salvation, saving faith, rested upon the acceptance of a theological position, or the conformity to an ecclesiastical demand and did not necessarily involve the actual transformation of personality. Winfred Garrison recalls the statement of the young preacher who was speaking about a certain disagreeable church officer who was grouchy, cruel in his family life, stingy and cunning in business, a trouble maker in the church and devoid of all interest in community life. "Still," said the minister, "I think he is a saved man."

In the face of this situation it is not surprising that the term "salvation" has slipped into the discard because of the feeling that it is centered in an other-worldly interest which ignores the vital issues of life and conduct. One modern Christian of fine life and radiant faith has said: "I am no longer much preoccupied with the question of my own personal salvation." Many people feel that

the conventional concept of being saved is essentially self-interested and egotistical. They quote that hymn of spiritual egotism and religious self-interest:

> Life is now sweet and my joy is complete
> For I'm saved, saved, saved.

It is well to remember that by great religious souls the passion for personal salvation has bowed before a nobler desire. Do we not recall the story of Moses who was so eager for his people's well-being that he prayed that for their sake his name might be blotted out of the book of life? Did not Paul express his willingness to be removed from out the field of divine grace for his brethren's sake? This selfish passion for personal salvation in the old theological sense has lost its ability to stir the depths of many keen minds today.

We are recognizing, however, that there is a higher concept of life, more far-reaching in its implications, nobler in its ethics, more divine in its essence, than the conventional emphasis of the old preaching. I wish we might salvage this word "salvation," recondition it and let it embody for us a newer, richer and more fruitful experience, one which will mean more to the individual and more to society and the kingdom of God.

Let us begin at the point where we arrived in our last study. Whatever sin is, salvation is the escape from it or the victory over it. If sin is to live below the best, then salvation is to live for the best. If being lost is wandering without a sense of an adequate goal, then being saved is to find the way. If to be lost is to live for self then to be saved is to live for others. If being lost is to fail to find God, then being saved is to find him.

Thus conceived, salvation is the achieving of a full-orbed and abundant life, an integrated personality, free from inner stress and conflict, fully adjusted to environment, consciously moving onward in cooperation with the creative, constructive plan of the universe. Being saved is thus thought of not in theological terms but in terms of life and experience. William James in "Varieties of Religious Experience," described this experience for us. He said, you will recall, "To be converted denotes the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self, hitherto divided and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious reality." It is hard to find a more exact statement than we have in these words. The saved life is the one which in its rela-

tionship to self, others and God, is unified, righteous, beautiful and happy.

If this concept of salvation is valid then everything which contributes to the enrichment and development of personality is an aid in salvation. We shall not draw a distinction, as has usually been done, between the good things which do not save and the one thing which does. Everything which ennobles, which beautifies, everything which makes men more lovable, more brotherly, helps in the process. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report"—these are all contributive towards the well-being of the individual and of society, which is the pattern of the desire of God. Therefore all these are aids in salvation.

Let us bring all this to the test of the thinking of Jesus. We should note that the term "salvation" is not an indispensable word with Jesus. We have a record of its use only once. However we do find him using the word "save" and his use of it is significant. Let us glance at the Greek word itself, which, although Jesus used Aramaic, probably takes us nearest to his mind. The Greek

word "savior" signified a healer or a deliverer, and indicated a deliverance not from penalty, but from disorder, from maladies of the body or soul. The "savior" was the healer of the broken-hearted, the unifier of distraught lives, the restorer of ailing spirits. We find that the word "save" was used interchangeably for the healing of body and the healing of mind, for the escape both from physical sickness and from sinful, disordered personality. By our translators it was sometimes rendered "saved" and sometimes "made whole." To the woman who touched his garment Jesus said, "Thy faith has saved thee; be healed." To the woman with the alabaster cruse he said, "Thy faith bath saved thee; be forgiven." A careful study of Jesus' use of the term "save" will reveal to us that the term did not primarily concern the future life. It was a present experience. It was non-theological, non-ecclesiastical. It had nothing to do with any sacrificial system, either past or prospective, it was a normal experience for an average individual. What was that experience?

It is just what these passages have indicated, a process of making life whole, complete, purposeful, righteous. It is to the personality what health is to the body, a freedom from limitations that it

may realize its highest possibility. Jesus said that he came to seek and to save the lost, which is literally and exactly true. He sought to take distraught, wandering lives and to restore them to their pristine beauty and link them up with the plan of his Father. In John's record of the conversation with Nicodemus, we have a picturesque phrase which assuredly gives us the essence of Jesus' thinking on this subject. "Ye must be born again." We are dealing here with a figure of speech which many religious folk have tried, as did Nicodemus, to literalize. The process of being saved, according to the thinking of Jesus, requires that one shall become a new individual, a different sort of person altogether, with new motives, new ideals, new mental and physical habits, new values, a new quality of life. The whole outlook shall be different. Life shall have a new center. It will be actually a new life!

When we examine the personalities that Jesus touched creatively, we discover that this was just what occurred. Here, for instance, with an alabaster cruse of perfume, came a harlot, with all the experiences, motives and habits that go with that type of life, with the restlessness, the dissatis-

faction, the social peril of such a career. She felt the touch of Jesus' personality and something happened; everything in her life went through a tremendous upheaval. That which had had value before lost its value; things at which she had scoffed, suddenly seemed the most desirable things in life. Different purposes were hers, different dreams. Her personality bloomed out into a radiance which her evil life had made impossible. She was actually a new individual!

Or consider Zacchaeus, the tax gatherer, a man who had gained his wealth by shrewdness and extortion, by greed and inhumanity; a miserable little shriveled soul he was, housed in a dwarfed body. But he heard about Jesus; the things the Master was talking about bothered and haunted him, and at the same time created a yearning for something better. They met and the influence of Jesus' striking personality made such an impression on Zacchaeus that the whole pattern of his life up to that point was cast into the discard and a new pattern was selected in accord with those values which Jesus had made clear. That weazened and grasping little soul suddenly laid hold upon a new set of ideals of brotherhood and honor; integrity

and helpfulness became the things which he most desired. Said he to Jesus, "I am going to take half of all that I possess and give it to the poor, and out of the remainder I intend to restore fourfold to every man whom I have cheated." Then Jesus remarked: "Today is salvation come to this house." This is the one occasion upon which Jesus used that word in our records. What had happened to give that term significance? Had Zacchaeus subscribed to the Westminister Confession of Faith? Had he in prophesy looked forward to some sacrificial event? Not at all. Salvation for Zacchaeus was the remaking of his life, its centralization in those values which Jesus presented to him. A little, selfish soul suddenly achieved its possibilities, a lost soul found the way of life.

But we have not yet plumbed the depths of Jesus' thinking on this subject. There is another factor in this process which we must not miss. The church has always held that salvation is not a "lifting ourselves by our bootstraps," but that in this process there is an element of surrender, of submission, of faith. I believe we shall find that both the thinking of Jesus and human experience support this belief.

As a matter of fact how do we achieve this integrated, radiant, triumphant, socially creative quality of life? This question brings us face to face with one of the most pregnant of Jesus' ideas. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose, it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall save it." That verse, in my opinion, is the key to the experience Jesus was seeking to evoke in men. The process of saving involves a letting go. Progress comes by surrender, achievement through commitment!

Let us examine this, for we do not want to accept this arbitrarily unless experience verifies it. This is the process Jesus has in mind; that an individual shall renounce everything that he has, shall let go all his desires, his ambitions, his hopes, his aspirations, his mental habits, his values, whatever that sacrifice may cost, and shall commit himself in a blend of surrender and faith to the highest value that he knows. He shall absolutely let himself go to it, let it recondition his life, reshape his motives, redirect his thought-processes, determine the pattern in accord with which his life is to be remade. He becomes indeed a new creature, nothing will have value for him save as it is related to this new life design. He has let himself go to a

mastery which is so integrated with the plan and the power of God that he finds himself spiritually empowered, a divine cooperator, and he moves forward, joyous, courageous, loving, unafraid, cleansed, a new creature, a child of God. He has found his way in God's world.

That is the experience which under hundreds of different names and with manifold theological interpretations has been experienced all down through the ages. From Zacchaeus and Mary Magdalene to the reformed drunkard, the spiritual leader and Christian business man, that is the change which has occurred. And that is the experience which the church holds out to the world as a way of life and salvation. Nothing has been said about the customary theological interpretations of salvation. Hold to them if they are meaningful to you, if they make experience more vivid. But however you describe it, through whatever mental associations you achieve it, it is the experience that counts, the freeing of life from its limitations and the enlargement of life into its fullest capacities as a child of God. It is a reconciliation between man and God, an atonement which is genuine and transforming. It costs all that a man is and all that a man has. It is not merely a salvation from some-

thing, but a saving for life at its best, radiant and divine.

> Who then is saved? He is one whose life
> Is built on love, on kindness and on faith;
> Who holds his brother as his other self;
> Who toils for justice, equity and peace
> And hides no aim of purpose in his heart
> That will not chord with universal good.

That life is for me and for us all inseparably associated with Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life, the revealer to us of the true way of life, and we may with conviction speak of Jesus as Savior, not because certain sins were mechanically heaped upon his head for the appeasing of divine wrath, but because for mankind in all ages when the personality of Jesus has been seen and felt, the reaction of men and women is that of Zacchaeus and Mary of Magdalene, of Peter and James and John. Historically the personality of Jesus has been the supreme revealer to us of the saved life, the winsome leader who has taken us into that transcendent, redemptive experience. And the world needs today the saving, redeeming leadership of Jesus.

Harnack stated before the war: "If darkness ever come over the world, and God and every spiritual

virtue grow dim, then it may be that the personality of Jesus will save us." It is indeed to Jesus that today we must look. We want all that science can give us, all the light of human knowledge; but we need more. When we have all that, I see no way to the highest development of personality; I see no way to the achievement of a better social order, except the way that Jesus of Nazareth has shown to us; the way of faith and love, the way of sacrifice and righteousness. That way led to the cross; and the cross is rightfully the symbol of redemption, not for mechanical reasons, nor as a propitiatory symbol, but because the losing of life, the sacrifice of self, the surrender of the individual, is the pathway of salvation. Jesus in loyalty to his vision of God's creative purpose took the flinty road to Calvary and thereby made the cruel cross the glowing symbol of divine love and human consecration. That costly cross-crowned pathway which Jesus trod is ever the road that leads to the heights. The life of love, of daring faith, the winsome power of a child of God are won as we follow in the sacrificial footsteps of Jesus. The question confronts us—are we willing to take Jesus' way? Even the price of a cross? That is the way of life!

PRAYER

THE request of the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray," has found an echo in the religious hearts of every age. It is rooted in the desire for that intimate experience of reality which all our religious argumentation can never provide. The modern man, as well as the primitive savage, wants to know what there is to prayer, what it results may be and the methods of its practice.

The concept and the practice of prayer have always been determined by men's ideas of God and their schemes of theology. Dr. James Gordon Gilkey in "A Faith for the New Generation" tells of a quaint mediaeval painting in the Royal Gallery at Naples. It shows in the background the city of Naples devastated by the plague of 1656. In the foreground the people of the city are imploring their officials to seek God's relief from this pestilence. The officials are interceding with the Carthusian monks. The monks in turn are praying to the city's three patron saints in the sky above them. The saints are passing the prayer on to the Virgin Mary. She is offering them to Jesus and he is presenting them to God. There you have one

idea of prayer, highly colored by an elaborate theological system, a system which you and I probably do not hold. But may it not be possible that some of our conventional concepts of prayer are just as highly colored with theological interpretations which are measurably unrealistic? I know that is true for some people in our Protestant churches, and it is on this account that in the minds of all too many thinking people today prayer is being discounted or discarded as a relic of an outworn superstition. There are many of us, however, who feel that prayer needs not to be discarded, but to be recreated, its mistaken interpretations eliminated and its glowing, potent realities vividly appropriated.

What are some of the new facts which we must recognize and take into account in our thought of prayer today? There is the new study of the religious ideas of primitive man. This shows us that while in many other phases of life we have outgrown the standards and methods of ancient man, yet the prayer life of many people still holds much that is akin to the attitude of the distant past. The savage had ideas of God that were childish and immature; his concept of prayer was equally infantile. He sought to appease the divine wrath and

secure the divine favor so that food and clothing and shelter might be obtained. His was an effort to induce God to adapt the divine will to human desire. In the childish nature of his wishes, in the methods he used to accomplish them, in his picture of God the devotional life of primitive man was naive and immature; but it furnished a pattern for prayer which very many people in the twentieth century have never succeeded in fully outgrowing. This study of ancient man in his prayer life has led to a demand for such a reinterpretation of prayer as will rid it of its primitive factors and make it a normal factor in the experience of modern man.

Another element that has required a readjustment in our idea of prayer is our maturing concept of God. No longer can we think of him as an anthropomorphic Diety who makes things happen if it chances to please him, who grants anything to the man who finds the correct verbal or ritualistic combination, who sends bears to consume children, who are amused by bald-headed prophets, who opens up the earth to swallow men who violate certain social tabus. Our concept of prayer must be adapted to a God who is the immanent, potent Spirit in a universe two hundred million

light-years in diameter. Ours is a God who is expressed in a dependable cosmos with definite laws with which we can grow familiar and with which we can cooperate. This means that our way of improving the physical conditions of life is not by entreating God to violate or to abrogate the laws of the natural world, but by a study of those laws and by cooperation with them.

Another field of study that has affected our thought of prayer is psychology, the science of mental processes. We are only on the frontiers of discovery here. There is so much more beyond us, but what we have learned has made some ideas of prayer untenable and others quite normal and inevitable. The study of human behavior, the analysis of motives, conscious and unconscious, the recognition of the part which training, custom and suggestion have in determining our thoughts and actions—all these, together with our discovery of mental laws by which prayer operates effectively, have brought our thought of worship and devotion out of the misty transcendental into the practical realm where prayer can be studied, its mistaken notions discarded and its practice improved.

But while we are changing our concept of prayer we must not forget that we are dealing with some-

thing which for multitudes of people in every age has been a real experience, which has worked tremendous changes in their lives, and has brought power and joy and character where these were not found before. When one seeks to dismiss prayer by a wave of the hand as a relic of mediaeval magic he should be confronted with the devotional experience of great souls, preeminently with the prayer experience of Jesus. Whatever our interpretation of prayer today it must be tremendous enough to account for these historical facts.

As we analyze and evaluate the prayer experience of great religious personalities, we discover that there are involved three elements. Let us consider these in turn, at first from the philosophical and scientific point of view which has been established in these studies; let us next see if that attitude is verified by the thought and practice of Jesus. Then if these three aspects of prayer can be translated into our experience we shall have discovered that which is of abiding value in the religious life.

In the first place the underlying premise of all prayer is that ours is a universe which is surely even though slowly working upward toward the creation of the noblest values. This point of view

has been expressed in one of our earlier studies and we shall simply recall it at this point. There is a creative Spirit in the universe emerging on higher and higher levels, reaching upward toward goodness and truth, toward beauty and toward love. This creative Spirit is everywhere seeking for expression, yearning through every plastic channel to create goodness, loveliness and brotherhood. Not only that, but the universe is also responsive to everyone who fits into that creative purpose. Whoever does seek to create these high and enduring values in himself and in society, while he may discover new depths of bitterness and intolerance in men will find that he has become integrated to the great world process; he will become aware that the universe is at his back and that flooding into his life will come power and tranquility, understanding and jubilance! May we sum it up in these words, that ours is a creative universe seeking to bring into being the highest worth and that whoever shares that goal will find the universe responsive and cooperating with him, not always giving him his easeful wishes or his own comfortable way, but lifting him to a peaceful, potent grandeur of soul that is cosmic?

That, in terms of modern thought, is what Je-

sus meant when he taught us to think of God as "Father," when he said to men that God sought to "give good things to those who ask him." Jesus has led us to think of God as embodying the finest qualities that we know, as seeking to create the finest characters in his children and as yearning to give to those children strength and courage for the realization of their highest ideals in themselves and in society. Jesus found God the great Cooperator, the Reservoir of spiritual resource, ever available to those who seek him. Jesus gained the peace and courage of his life because of his confidence that, while the way of love he lived brought him misery, antagonism and death, nevertheless in living a life of love he was doing his Father's will, was related to the divine plan, was living the only way by which men could advance the plan of God. The response of God to the cooperation of Jesus was not the abolition of the cross but the impartation to Jesus of the qualities of personality that have made him through the ages the one by whom "whate'er our name or sign," we test our lives.

That is one element in prayer: God is seeking the highest good for man and cooperates with man when he pursues that goal. The next factor in prayer is human intensity and eagerness, aspira-

tion and desire. We have learned from the psychologist that anything worth while is achieved only when there is intensity of desire on man's part. The blasé and indifferent individual accomplishes nothing; no man drifts into character, or loafs along into success. The price of achieving values is an intensity which enlists every capacity of the personality and, as it were, hurls the whole self headlong in the direction of one's ideal. That ideal must first be visualized definitely and winsomely. The individual must believe in its attainability and with all the force of his being set out to accomplish it. Without a definitely visualized goal life is but a thrashing around in the dark. Without intensity of desire an ideal becomes but a wishful gesture. Scientific study of man has made it very clear that intensified eagerness for a visualized goal is essential for progress. The higher and nobler the goal, the more socially valuable, the more capable of creating emotional earnestness, then the greater achievement.

Let us now check this by the thinking of Jesus. Our Master was seeking constantly to visualize for men the finest values of life. He endeavored to help them see the life abundant, the life of love, of purity, of beauty, of service, of sheer goodness. He

was also at all times eager to awaken in them a desire to achieve that life, and to embody in themselves those noblest qualities of personality. Read through the gospels and list the number of occasions on which Jesus sought to awaken desire. "Ask," he said; "seek," "knock,"—these were his words. He gave parables of importunity in which he visualized a resistless urgency of desire. Do you recall that story of the man who at midnight importuned his friend to help in a domestic emergency? Jesus wanted to create in men a hunger, a yearning, a magnificent and resistless demand for the highest things of life. To him it seemed fatal for men to live indolently, passively. Life for men as for him must be a passionate quest for light and love, for truth, for brotherhood!

We have now two elements, a God seeking to *impart* all good gifts and man seeking intensely to *achieve* all good gifts. We see God and man, both seeking the same goal. How can cooperation be achieved? That brings us to the third aspect of our subject which is a question of technique. How can God, who is seeking all good things, and man who is seeking all good things as well, be so thoroughly integrated that this guiding light and power of God can be imparted to man? Prayer is the

way of life by which these two are integrated, by which human need touches divine resource, by which man taps divine energy and becomes triumphantly integrated into God's great world process, becomes thus a co-creater with God and is able to live the victorious life as a child of God.

In the study of the technique of prayer we can go to the scientist for help. He tells us much about the laws of the mind and the ways in which a visualized ideal, accepted by an individual, realizes itself in personality. He explains to us those laws in accord with which solitude and meditation become spiritually creative; he shows us the value of affirmations, the way in which worship breaks down old habit-systems and affords clearer insight into reality. He shows us the way in which the prayer life produces results in the recreating of the individual and society. If God is indeed an immanent Spirit expressed, not only through the laws of nature, but through the laws of personality, then the operation of the laws of psychology no more eliminates God from the prayer life than the law of gravity eliminates him from the natural world.

This which science tells us regarding prayer is in perfect harmony with the devotional technique which Jesus gave us for our guidance; it is also in

entire accord with his own practice and with that of the great religious souls of history. "When thou prayest enter into thine inner chamber and having shut thy door, commune with thy Father who seeth in secret." This is not the occasion to study in detail the striking conformity between Jesus' practice of prayer and the scientific approach to the devotional life, nor is this the time to study the technique of the prayer life for the modern man. Many books dealing with these matters are available for anyone who is desirous of further study in this field. Our purpose now is rather to demonstrate the validity and the necessity of the prayer life in our own time, and if possible, to awaken a desire which will exalt prayer to a larger place in our experience.

Prayer then is a technique of life by which the individual becomes integrated with the divine, by which man makes a genuine adjustment to the world in which he lives, by which he eagerly lays hold upon the available power of God. It is the opening of his life to the highest, it is the flinging open of the doors of his soul that the sunshine of reality may stream in. It is the intensification of one's ambition to achieve life's noblest goals. It is "the soul's sincere desire" for one's own complete

development, for the well-being of others and for the advance of humanity into the fulfillment of God's plan for a redeemed humanity. It is a potent form of cooperation with God!

There is a question which constantly arises in the minds of folk and which we do not want to dodge. Frequently men ask, "why are not my prayers answered? I have prayed intensely for things that are certainly desirable and yet the heavens remained but unanswering brass." This individual can quote many scripture passages to support the justice of his claim that his prayers should have been resultful: "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find." "Whatsoever ye ask in my name, ye shall receive." A point of view may be suggested from which this problem can be approached. We must remind ourselves that prayer is only one factor in this world process; there are other ways and wills and laws. Prayer is a vital element in life and an indispensable one; but other determining elements cannot be ignored. Also we must ever keep in mind that prayer is not a changing of God's plan. No prayer is ever answered which is not the thing that the divine will is already seeking. Jesus' statements regarding the effectiveness of prayer were not flung out like an Aladdin's lamp for any

one to use in getting anything he wanted. They were assurances of available power for those who had sufficiently progressed in the spiritual life to seek those goals which were God's. John records this statement: "If ye abide in me and I in you—*then* ask what ye will." Prayer increases in effectiveness as it approximates the cosmic desires of God. That is why in the opinion of many of us prayer should at the outset accept the laws of nature as the divine will, finding in prayer an instrument by which those laws may be better understood and more effectively utilized. We are making progress when we outgrow the primitive idea of prayer, as a means of getting God to do things for us, and perceive that it is a means not of changing God but of changing ourselves, a method of discovery of his will, a method of cooperating with that will, a means of gaining power and insight for living the godly life. In our pain and puzzlement we often pray as Jesus did in Gethsemane that the cup of suffering and failure may pass, and when our prayers are unanswered it is well if we can move with Jesus on to that maturer attitude of faith which finds in prayer not the means of avoiding life's misery but the method of rising through

suffering to a godlike grandeur and to an inner peace which the world cannot take away.

I am not saying to you today that you ought to pray. Prayer that is performed as an external act of religious obligation has little spiritual value, but I am saying that if you want to live life at its best, if you are eager to find life's inner meaning and fulfil its greatest possibilities, if you desire to find a source of joy, if you seek to have a capacity for meeting crises without flinching, if you yearn to live victoriously, if you want to gear into the creative process—then prayer affords you the means by which you can do it. Not in primitive or childish fashion but with the mature intelligence of the modern mind you can find in the devotional life a path of experience that will bring to you spiritual strength and a sense of divine comradeship which the rational processes alone cannot give. You will find a way of achieving that quality of soul which has made Jesus the world's supreme figure and our guide into the finest living; that quality of soul which should mark the daily life of every disciple of Jesus.

IMMORTALITY

THERE are people who, as De Quincey said of Coleridge, "want better bread than can be made out of wheat." They demand regarding man's future destiny a kind of assurance which, in the nature of the case, is not available. They want others to supply them with evidence which can result only from their own quality of life. They seek a certainty through hearing something which they can only gain by becoming something.

In our approach to the problem of immortality we shall seek to avoid both a materialistic scepticism and an over-zealous credulity. There are some who demand that immortality be scientifically, objectively, mathematically demonstrated, and if this sort of evidence is lacking, they reject the idea outright. Then there are others who require for their certainty simply the noisy affirmation of dogmatic preachers; if their minister declaims forcibly enough they will accept his argument without scrutiny. They welcome inadequate evidence too readily.

Without going to either extreme of agnosticism or credulousness, what may we think about

man's future destiny? Let us recognize at the outset that man's hope of immortality must rest not upon scientific facts, but upon spiritual insight, not upon physical data but upon a sense of values. When we were studying the personality of Jesus we were handling historical facts; when we were considering the Bible, the disorders of the individual and the saving escape from those maladies, we were working with material which could be scientifically analyzed and verified. But the basis of our study today is of a different kind. Our five senses are the channels through which is available all scientifically demonstrable information regarding the world about us. The testimony that comes from the eyes, the ears, the touch all agrees that death is the end. There is no one of the five senses that is capable of giving us any information whatever upon which we can rest any faith in the future life; on the question of immortality our physical senses are silent. This means that we must look elsewhere if we are to find any substantiation for this perennial hope which has permeated the mind of the race.

We shall have to go beyond the realm of demonstrated physical facts; we shall have to rise from sight to insight, from physical to spiritual percep-

tion. Nor is this such an impossible or unusual thing to do. Consider Tschaikowsky's Fifth Symphony which some of us heard this past week. The strong beauty and the lilting loveliness of that music has reality and meaning only to those who have some measure of artistic insight and musical perception. The artistry of that music can not be reduced to a mathematical formula with which an unmusical mind can be compelled to appreciate. Insight and inspiration are the product of training and culture. So it is with beauty in all of its forms, with love, with goodness, with all the noblest factors of life. They can not be subjected to a test-tube analysis. They are achieved and appreciated only by those the quality of whose inner lives enables them to perceive factors which are never dreamed of in the materialist's philosophy. So it is in our consideration of man's future destiny, we must look elsewhere than to science for our grounds of certainty.

Nevertheless the new knowledge which our generation has gained, even though it cannot demonstrate immortality, has rendered untenable certain conventional interpretations of the future life. Had we time it would be interesting to trace the hisory of man's idea of immortality. Were we to do

so we would discover that this subject, as others we have considered, is encumbered with many primitive and mediaeval interpretations, which are the heritage to us of the days when men knew little about the universe and still less about their own fallible thought-processes. Our new knowledge requires many readjustments in our thought of the future: to a few of these let us turn our attention.

The materialistic and localized concepts of man's future abode were based upon the old Ptolemaic cosmology. Heaven was up in the skies and hell was down under the flat earth. Being places, definitely located, they were pictured in spacial, materialistic terms. But Copernican astronomy has banished "up" and "down" from our universe. That direction which is "up" to us now is "down" twelve hours from now. The concept of relativity has given us so many motions, while astronomy and astrophysics have so acquainted us with sidereal spaces that any materialistic localization of man's future abode with thrones, streets and harps is quite untenable to the modern mind.

In our thinking today also the idea of the resurrection of the body has given place to a belief in the immortality of the soul. Paul's doctrine of the resurrection of the body even to him did not

mean, as many people suppose, a resuscitation, a reassembling of the chemical constituents of the physical body. Because the Greek language had no term equivalent to "personality," the phrase "spiritual body" was the figure of speech which Paul was forced to use, in his effort to show that in the future life the self would be completely fitted to its non-material environment. When we die whatever else may happen, we are forever through with these bodies of ours, and the more speedily and in the more sanitary fashion our bodies can be returned to the physical elements from which they came, without being left to cumber the world and to create a problem for future generations, the better. Our modern idea of the preservation of personality contains all that is essential in the Pauline concept of bodily resurrection without being hampered by materialistic accretions which Paul himself did not hold.

A third factor in our thinking, of which past ages were not aware, is the recognition that the presentation of future blessedness as a reward for good behavior, and future punishment as a threat to restrain evil impulses means the reduction of morality to the level of expediency. This is a very fine ethical point, but its constant emerging in

our thinking today is evidence of a keener moral perception than has been possessed by religious thinkers in the past. The man who does right because he hopes thereby to go to heaven is inherently self-interested, and his action can never achieve the moral grandeur of the one who does right, not because he expects to be rewarded for it, but because he chooses the right for its own sake. The individual who needs a future life to put vitality into his moral principles is living below the uplands of morality. That individual is truly moral who would not swerve one inch from his chosen path of right conduct even though it were demonstrated to him that there were no future life. Unfortunately religion in the past has consented to ally itself with this mediocre morality which is satisfied with a self-interested motive; it has been willing to use heaven as a bribe and hell as a threat to induce ecclesiastical conformity and moral conventionality. Happily in some circles at least religion is rising to higher ethical levels and is refusing to descend to the use of celestial lollypops and infernal shillalahs to induce men to behave themselves.

Also we are seeing more clearly than here-to-fore that the widespread yearning for immortality, while it has some evidential value as to the nature

of the world order, cannot be made to bear as much weight as has usually been put upon it. Like some other arguments we have mentioned, it convinces only those who are already convinced. The recognition today of man's tendency to wishful thinking reduces, somewhat at least, the validity of this argument. We discover that fear very often creates a theory of escape, that grief and lonesomeness tend to cling with a startling credulity to any compensating idea; witness the fashion in which spiritualist mediums prey upon grief-stricken folk! When we grow aware that in the past, as Dean Inge has reminded us, religion has been built often upon what pleases the worshippers rather than what is true, we cannot impose too much upon the impulses of man. No, we must look elsewhere. Where are we twentieth century folk to turn to find the foundation and the stones with which to erect the structure of our belief regarding man's future destiny?

There are many lines of reasoning which have been adduced, some of them historical, some psychological, some theological. They are all included in certain outstanding comprehensive books which are available to us all. But we cannot now rehearse nor analyze these arguments. Rather, I am

eager that we should get back of them all to that basic life-attitude upon which this question ultimately depends. We shall concern ourselves with that outlook upon life which is so fundamental that if it is missing all other arguments will fail and fall, but if it is present then other valid evidences will assume their relative places in the constellation of faith.

Our concept of man's future must rest at last for its foundation upon *our philosophy of value,* upon our concept of the universe, our ideas of reality, the nature of our belief in God. Those who have followed these studies from the beginning have found emerging consistently through them all a perception of value which underlies all religion and which nourishes normally a faith in immortality.

We believe that this universe is the expression of a purposive Intelligence, an immanent Spirit that is seeking to create higher and higher values, eager to bring into fulness and universality—justice, goodness, beauty, truth and love. These are all character traits which exist in personality. We find then in personality the highest value to which this creative process has attained. We therefore may conclude that personal life is the most worth-

while of all things we know, the most significant, the most precious, the one factor the frustration of which would be the most tragic. If the universe is the expression of a creative intelligence, establishing and conserving value, and if personality is the highest of all known values, then the preservation of those values, the conservation of personality, is an inevitable corollary and the annihilation of those highest values would be inadmissible. The character of the universe is at stake here. What are we to think if the highest values, the product of age-long creative effort are more evanescent than lesser values like stones and water? Have those factors which possess most meaning for us, only a transient significance in the world process? Or do those personal elements which have supreme worth for us possess also an ultimate worth? A philosophy of value, with its thesis that the creation and conservation of the highest value, personality, are the essence of reality, determines the modern man's attitude toward immortality.

Let us now state this gospel of eternal values in more vivid and pictorial but none the less realistic phraseology. Our hope of immortality rests upon our belief in the character of God. If God

is a Father, if God can in any sense at all be considered a God of love, then the abiding worth of personality is a normal expectation. Let us note several statements which will illustrate this point of view. Says L. P. Jacks in "A Living Universe": "Suppose we found that the Great Soul of the World is making use of us as instruments for its own glory, or as pawns in a great game of evolution . . . , sacrificing us for that high purpose, and not minding how many of us it sacrificed, then I say that Soul would be doing the very thing which when we do it to one another we recognize as unjust." Harry Emerson Fosdick has a message for us: "The reasonableness of the universe is pledged to the immortality of men: the beneficence of God is unthinkable without it; the verdict of the spiritual seers confirms it; and when it is put to the verifying test of life it builds the loftiest character."

Still more impressive is the statement of Canon Streeter: "In the last resort, it is not a question of what we personally would be content with for ourselves, or what opinions we entertain as to our own individual value. It is what the Universe is worth. What can we say of It, or the Power

behind It, if It treats the individuality of heroic souls like oyster-shells at a banquet, whisked from the table to make room for the next course? . . . In the belief in immortality the rationality of the Universe is at stake. By our decision as to this, the quality of Reality is finally appraised. If there is a God at all, we are his children, and he must care for us. If we believe in God at all, it is not sentiment, nor self-deluded hope, it is the coldest logic that compels us to approach the question of a future life from the standpoint of his greatness, not that of our littleness and weariness, our doubts and despair. 'The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God,'—and we may be content to leave them there."

Man's belief, therefore, in immortality rests upon his belief in God, upon his insight into the nature of the universe and into the character of the Divine. There is therefore no way to which you can persuade an atheist of the value of immortality. Only he whose spiritual insight and "moral optimism"—to borrow a phrase of Macintosh's—enable him to put a spiritual interpretation upon the world, can find satisfying grounds for his belief in personal survival. It is a venture

of faith; it is a testimony of one's judgment of the universe; it indicates not only one's response to the highest values, but one's conviction that those highest values are so intimately related to divine reality that their possessors are lifted to the level of permanence.

Is this a rational faith? If science is unable to prove it, does science at least indicate its possibility and perhaps its probability? One answer to that question is found in the scientific theory of levels. We discern that in this age-long process creation has moved upward from level to level and that when there is an ascent to a new plane, there emerge powers, capacities, qualities, freedoms which not only were unpossessed on the lower level, but were unpredictable on that lower plane. It is therefore not irrational for us to think that this developmental process in its movement toward freedom, toward mastery of environment should reach a stage of evolution such that personality develops a survival value of which death is not the end. J. Y. Simpson in "Man and the Attainment of Immortality," has worked out this idea from the standpoint of a scholar who adds insight to his science. This same attitude is voiced in language

somewhat more figurative by a scientific mind of the past generation, John Fiske.

> The more thoroughly we comprehend that process of evolution by which things have come to be what they are, the more we are likely to feel that to deny everlasting persistence of the spiritual element in man is to rob the whole process of its meaning. It would go far toward putting us to permanent intellectual confusion. Speaking for myself I can see no insuperable difficulty in the notion that at some period in the evolution of humanity this divine spark may have acquired sufficient concentration and steadiness to survive the wreck of material forms and endure forever. Such a crowning wonder seems to be no more than a fit climax to a creative work that has been ineffably beautiful and marvelous in all its myriad stages.

But this belief, we must recognize, rests upon a man's interpretation of the facts, upon the quality of his insight, upon his faith in the nature of the universe and the character of God. As for me I rejoice that it rests just there. The silence of the grave is one of those factors which turns from a curse to a blessing when man comes to understand it. Belief in immortality, like man's belief in God, involves the venture of faith. If immortality were made as axiomatic as the multiplication table, as

certain as tomorrow's dawn, our first impulse would be to say: "what a satisfaction!" but we would soon find that life would lose the daring, the venture, the courage, the faith which the mystery of the universe creates. It would reduce religion from the daring adventure it is, to a cold, calculating question of expediency. I am glad that the hope of immortality is not something which we can bludgeon a man into believing, but that it is rather the fruitage of a splendor of life into which we are privileged to enter and to help others to share. So our purpose is not to coerce materialistically-minded folk into believing in the future life but to strive in this present world to create in them those spiritual qualities which will flower out in this perennial hope.

There is a question which some of you will want to ask: in what fashion are we today to think of the future life? It will be very well for us to follow the leadership of Jesus who, while he voiced the conviction of immortality, did not go into details regarding the nature of that future life. In my own thinking there are three factors which necessarily inhere in the very concept of personal survival; without any one of them immortality would be meaningless. One of these is the contin-

uance of personal identity. The trend of evolution is toward individuation and anything other than self-conscious survival would not be immortality in any real sense. The second element is fellowship. Personality being what it is, comradeship and interplay with other prized personalities is the requirement of any immortality that is meaningful. The third factor is growth; not static continuance, but personal and moral progress, freedom, activity and advancement. I believe that any future life which is to conserve the value of personality must, in the nature of the case, involve self-consciousness, fellowship and growth. Beyond that lies speculation.

What is the bearing of all this upon daily life? Some people ask that question petulantly; some ask it wistfully. Said Robert Louis Stevenson, "to believe in immortality is one thing—but it is first needful to believe in life." Assuredly we recognize that this life is our immediate concern. Our prime business is in this world here and now. More and more are we coming to see that the vital aspects of religion have to do with daily conduct, that salvation is an immediate experience, and that life at its best is the goal which we seek to achieve for its own sake and not for the sake of future

bliss. Are we therefore to eliminate immortality from our thought? Not for an instant. It is our sense of supreme values with the resultant belief in immortality that opens to us the limitless scope and eternal implications of our present task. Let us recall some words of Dr. Oman: "The first object of religion is not to demonstrate the reality of a future life, but to reconcile us to God in this. . . . Being reconciled to God, we find a meaning in life which is ever expanding and a purpose death cannot end . . . a triumphant hope larger than this life can contain." Immortality then is not a distant goal which self-interestedly we seek; it is the present fact which makes us unwilling to live below our best. We live radiantly not so that we can go to heaven some day—but because now, we are the children of God, living an endless life, too valuable to be debased. We live now a life which by virtue of its Godliness is deathless!

There is a dramatic incident in the life of John A. Brashear, the manufacturer of lenses. During his young manhood Brashear and his wife in the little cottage in Pittsburgh where they lived devoted every odd moment to the grinding of a great lens. They spent a year in the preparation of that lens with which they hoped to get a clearer

glimpse of the stars than had ever yet been gained. One night as they were preparing for the work they heard a crack and that lens to which they had devoted a year of effort snapped from side to side. It was a tragedy which almost broke their hearts. It is significant of their spirit that the next night when he returned from work his wife had a new piece of glass in place ready to start over again. But here is our concern—why was the breaking of that great lens of more moment to them than the cracking of a glass tumbler on the dinner table? Because it was of more value! Because in it they had put their devotion and their efforts and their prayers month after month for a whole year! Because with this lens they were hoping to pierce the spacious skies! No tumbler on the table had such value as that lens. But that lens in turn had no value in any way comparable with those two heroic and indomitable personalities who faithfully formed it and triumphantly survived its crash! There is a parable of value! A lens means more than a tumbler. But of how much more value is a man than a lens! Of how much more worth is personality than a body or anything material!

Our bodies are transient things that change and decay, but personalities are of a higher order. Be-

cause of the creative energy and the possibilities they represent, they possess an abiding value.

Surely man who is the goal of countless ages of creative effort, who bears the image of the divine, who holds limitless potentiality, possesses a worth too noble for wastage, too glorious for debasing, and too divine for annihilation. When that gospel of values masters our minds and hearts then do we come to live today as children of God, working with the Father for the creation of the highest qualities in ourselves and in society. We learn to live that life to which Jesus has shown the way—the life possessed of a righteous peace and a jubilant freedom which death can never destroy.

And now comes winging into our thoughts the Easter faith of the Christian Church—the conviction that the tomb did not mark the end of the life of Jesus, that death did not mean his annihilation. The Church has risen on the faith that at the heart of reality is a purpose, a love, a sense of values such that the transcendent worth of the personality of Jesus could not cease. If it has, then indeed is our faith vain. If this is a world in which such a one as Jesus can be cast into the void, then does our universe of value come tumbling down like a house of cards. This is our faith—

that Jesus has survived death, and that as he lives, we too shall live!

So, as disciples of Jesus, we accept his premise of a Father who cares, who helps, who conserves; with Jesus we trust the way of love and strive to build a better world, assured that for such a life, death is the swinging open of portals that admit the personality of man into a larger freedom and a more victorious existence.

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